the weekly
Standard

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REAGAN'S LONG SHADOW
DAVID ADESNIK • TERRY EASTLAND
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THERE THEY GO AGAIN

Why the 9/11 Commission and the media refuse to see the ties between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda

STEPHEN F. HAYES • WILLIAM KRISTOL

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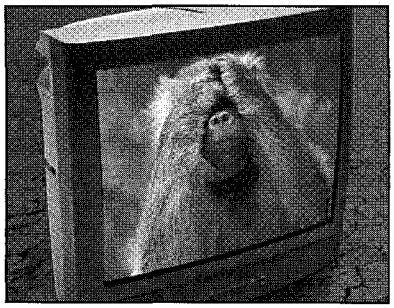

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Rocky Mountain Hijinks

The Bush reelection campaign will want to begin paying serious attention to a scheme now underway in Colorado to alter the formula by which that state awards its votes in the Electoral College. Like 47 other states and the District of Columbia, Colorado has traditionally allocated its electoral votes on a winner-take-all basis—to whichever candidate secures a statewide popular plurality. (Maine and Nebraska give their overall popular ballot winner a two-electoral-vote "bonus" and then divvy up the remainder according to who comes out on top in each congressional district.) Thus it was that in 2000 George W. Bush, with 50.8 percent of Colorado's popular vote (to 42.4 percent for the second-place Al Gore), won the state's entire 8-vote Electoral College allotment.

Not incidentally, Bush's total Electoral College margin was a mere 5 votes: 271 to 266. And it ought to have been just 4; one Gore elector in the District of Columbia withheld his vote "in protest."

So, also not incidentally, Democrats who live in Colorado (financed almost entirely by Democrats who *don't* live in Colorado) are now collecting signatures for a November ballot initiative that would alter the state's Electoral College allocation formula—beginning with this year's presidential election. Should the "Make Your Vote for President Count" initiative succeed, Colorado's electoral votes will be proportionally awarded according to its popular-vote results. If George W. Bush again wins 50.8 percent of Colorado's popular vote, for example, he'll be allowed to claim only 50.8 percent of its Electoral College delegation (rounded to the nearest vote), not the whole thing. And had this rule been in effect *last* time around, for further example, Bush and Gore would have split Colorado's electoral votes, 5 to 3—a 6-vote swing that all by itself would have put Gore in the White House.

To the obvious objection—that their plan looks and smells like the purest, rawest partisanship—its sponsors respond indignantly. It's a matter of simple principle, don't you know: "What we are proposing to do, at least in Colorado," says (Democratic campaign consultant) Rick Ridder, the initiative's lead operative, "is to come much closer to the notion of one-man, one-vote." And (Democratic) state senator Ron Tupa, a high school government teacher, agrees. How's he supposed to explain to his students an electoral process that elevates George W. Bush to the presidency despite the fact that Al Gore won more votes? "People can't understand why we have this kind of system that seems so outdated and hasn't been reformed in 200 years."

Funny then, isn't it, that Sen. Tupa & Co. are proposing a "reform" that works best, for their purposes, only if all the other states *don't* adopt it? Had a proportional-allocation system been in effect in Colorado—and nowhere else—on Election Day 2000, Al Gore would indeed have been elected president. But had the very same plan been in force throughout the country, it turns out it wouldn't have made much difference at all. We've done the math: Bush would have lost a single electoral vote—to Ralph Nader—but Gore would still have been three votes short. In other words, the popular vote winner would still have been denied an ultimate victory. Surely this is not what the new Colorado initiative's backers (pretend to) have in mind.

Also, we can't help wondering why the sponsors and financiers of "Make Your Vote for President Count" aren't similarly active in, say, California and New York, where in 2000 such a plan would have transferred a whopping 36 electoral votes from Gore to Bush. Curious, no? ♦

King Midas in Reverse

Speaking of Al Gore, how's about this amazing piece of testimony concerning the former vice president's matchless talent for poisoning whatever political cause is foolish enough to let him come within spitting distance. In a lengthy June 9 interview with Christopher Graff of the AP, former Vermont governor and presidential frontrunner Howard Dean, "relaxed in a sweater and jeans," and occasionally allowing himself a "rare display of emotion," fondly remembers his legions of supporters and ponders what went wrong:

> Dean dates the beginning of the end to the endorsement in December by former Vice President Al Gore, a move that galvanized the opposition. "Everyone figured, including Bill Clinton, that we were going to win the whole thing when that happened," said Dean. "They figured that was it. The other five guys started having meetings about how to take us down after that happened."

Anybody want to take a guess how many times John Kerry and Al Gore will appear together in public this fall? ♦

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Dead Horse Beat Report

Someone claiming to be Air America talk-show host Al Franken phoned our offices last week seeking clarification of a recent SCRAPBOOK item about the real-life Mr. Franken's possible 2008 U.S. Senate campaign in Minnesota. Judging from this fellow's amusing, spot-on vocal mimicry and the impressive discipline with which he remained "in character" throughout the conversation, we figured our caller for a pro: a talented comic actor. Furthermore, the man was calm, reasonable, and friendly —charming, even. In short: He must've taken THE SCRAPBOOK for a complete idiot or something. "Al Franken," indeed.

But what the hell, let's play along.

"First of all, I was not born in Minnesota," Mr. Franken's doppelgänger informed us. A reference in the June 3 *Sacramento Bee* to his "native Minnesota" notwithstanding, "I was actually born in New York and moved to Albert Lea, Minnesota, when I was 4." His mother's family owned a quilting business, see, and his father thought Albert Lea would make an excellent place to site a new factory because there was a rail line running through the town. Except that "the railroad didn't *stop* in Albert Lea," a fact the Frankens discovered only after they'd arrived. "So we moved to Minneapolis."

Memo to the genuine Al Franken, wherever you are: Think hard on this Albert Lea parable before again relocating to Minnesota. There are voters in that state, it's true. Whether they will pay you any mind is quite another question, however.

But we digress. "Secondly," the *faux* phone Franken advised us, "I named *three* members of the congressional delegation" from Minnesota when interviewed by the *Bee*: only "one House member" out of eight,but "both senators," as well. "Of course, I knew the names of the senators."

Finally, this gentleman politely but firmly objected to our suggestion that the *Bee* had "quoted Franken gushing" about a recent conversation he'd had with Hillary Clinton. Not so, he said: "I don't think I gushed."

THE SCRAPBOOK—or someone claiming to be THE SCRAPBOOK, at any rate—is pleased to correct the record. ♦

Congratulations!

The sixth annual Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Journalism has been awarded to Daniel Henninger, deputy editor of the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page. Sponsored by the Eric Breindel Memorial Foundation, and generously supported by News Corporation, Breindel's longtime employer and this magazine's corporate parent, the award is the richest honor in opinion journalism, carrying a prize of $10,000. It is presented each year to the columnist or editorialist whose work best reflects the spirit that animated Breindel's own writing: love of country, commitment to democratic institutions, and determination to bear witness to the evils of totalitarianism. ♦

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Casual

Whisky River

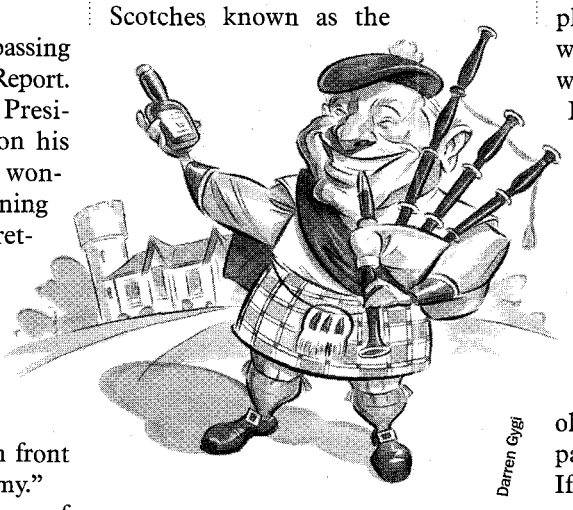
I generally don't advocate drinking whisky for breakfast. But on occasion, when necessity dictates, it does have a way of setting the world right. I was on the fifth day of a Scotches of Scotland distilleries tour, stewing in my Highlands hotel perched on a bluff overlooking Moray Firth. My cell phone was busted. My liver wasn't far behind. I was suffering guilt spasms over my self-imposed news blackout.

To learn how the world was passing me by, I checked the Drudge Report. The headlines screamed that President Bush had taken a spill on his mountain bike. John Kerry wondered whether he'd lost his training wheels, and journalists were fretting whether it was on the record. Such epochal matters of state drove me straight back to the Glenmorangie, newly mindful of philosopher-king Tom Waits's maxim, "I'd rather have a free bottle in front of me, than a pre-frontal lobotomy."

The free bottles came courtesy of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States and its member distillers. Some call them the liquor lobby. I call them angels. They call me "junket whore," but I'll live with it, in order to trek off with them every few years on one of their liquors-of-the-world tours, a scheme they devised to sell writers on the glories of spirits-consumption. It would seem unnecessary. Most writers I know regard "drinking responsibly" as not putting ice in their 15-year-old Laphroaig.

It's hard not to behave like a tourist when you see glorious Scotland in May—to not take snaps of the shimmering lochs or yellow fields of rapeseed, or of signs like "Glenlivet Primary School" (they start them young over here). It was enough to make us go native, in a fake touristy sort of way: to eat haggis straight out of the intestinal bag, to spew bad *Highlander* dialogue (*"I'm a MacLeod from the clan MacLeod and I cannot die!"*), and to inflict CDs like my "Pipin' Hot" bagpipes collection on our Scottish bus driver. ("If I see another fow'kin' bagpiper, I'll shoot 'im in the neck," threatened Jimmy.)

But it was whisky we came for, and whisky we were given, from the Scotches known as the


Darren Gygi

Lowland Ladies to the smokier, peatier "barbecues in a bottle" of the western isles. Mostly traveling in Speyside, in the central Highlands, we were taught by the Scotch masters how to nose it and taste it and hold it on your tongue, or, as Dalmore's Richard Paterson puts it, to "give every tooth a say in it." He does not so much drink it as have a conversation with it: "Hello, how are you? Quite well, thank you very much." When he's pouring us a wee dram of a $46,000-per-bottle 62-year-old Scotch, he makes clear that knocking it back fast with ice is a sin akin to throwing your snoozing grandpa out in the cold, naked.

At first, our group went in for all the descriptors lavished on these single malts—words like "fruit-forward" and "pork crackling" and "new cowhide"—till the absurdity overtook us and we fashioned new absurdities of our own ("nutty and slutty," "third-world clinic," and "smoldering rope that's been extinguished in a glass of Diet Pepsi"). It all seemed a bit fruit-forward to waste time discussing these whiskies, rather than drinking them.

Instead, they fueled us for our nightly No-Talent Show in which colleagues would pull back the furniture to play "air-clarinet" or Morris-dance or—as one demure correspondent from *Today's Black Woman* did almost nightly—belt out a glass-rattling rendition of "The Impossible Dream." They were soirées of the kind one would expect in the company of people who appreciate good whisky and who can drink copious amounts of it without wearing the lampshade home. Each night, sober formality dissolved into convivial intimacy, as at the Kenmore Hotel, where Crooked Jack, an ornery, tartan-wearing, guitar-playing folkie, took requests and then refused to play them.

There, I conversed with an old friend, Gary Regan, author of *The Joy of Mixology*. A 52-year-old Brit, he's an ideal drinking companion and a bartender's bartender. If you need to know how much gin goes in a Monkey Gland, Gary's your man. Since I'd last seen him on a bourbon junket, he'd lost half his tongue to cancer. He has a new tongue now, fashioned from his forearm skin, and a new lease as well. A lifelong atheist, he'd found God. "And you know what?" he said, looking to cut the earnestness, "She's got a great set."

I should've decked him for sacrilege, but there was no time. Not with Crooked Jack finally relenting and playing "American Pie." Around about the time the levee went dry, I threw my arm around Gary and offered to buy him something meaty and peaty and 12 years old. Or I would've, if the whisky hadn't already been the best kind of all: gratis.

Matt Labash

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Straight from Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy headquarters:

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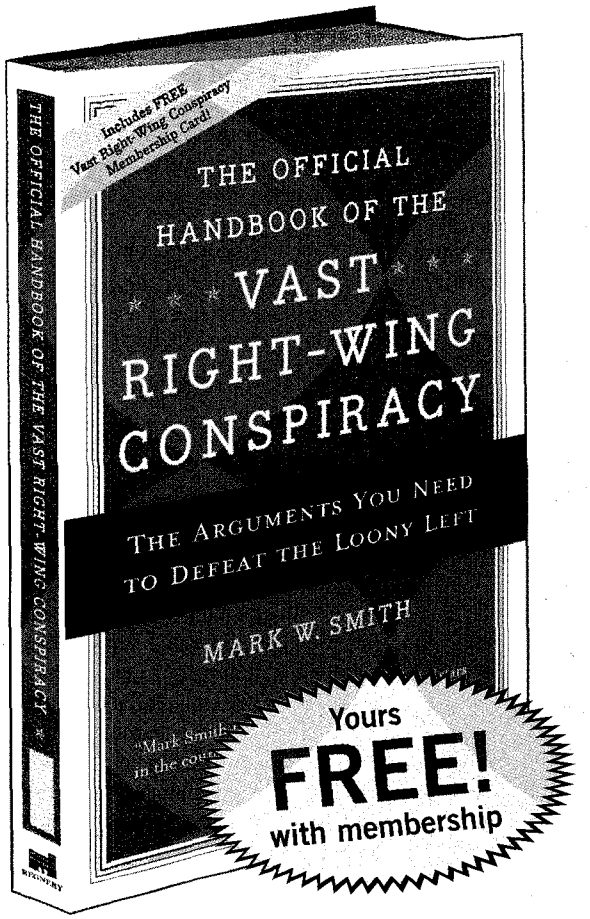

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Public Enemy

I WRITE to set the record straight regarding classical music on public radio (Andrew Ferguson's "Radio Silence," June 14).

Contrary to the article's skewed view, public radio is the most vibrant presenter of classical music, and other forms of cultural expression, on the nation's airwaves. The nonprofit public radio community, including NPR stations and independent producers, brings a wide selection of classical music to millions of listeners weekly. Most is produced by local stations, complemented by national programs like NPR's *World of Opera*, *Symphonycast*, and *Performance Today*, with the latter the most listened-to classical program in America. In hundreds of communities, local stations partner with cultural organizations to promote the arts, broadcast performances live, or record them for later use.

NPR was awarded a National Medal of Arts in 2000—the only broadcast organization ever to receive it—for 30 years of exemplary cultural programming. The award reflected our community's devotion to cultural expression—including classical music.

Among the 773 public radio stations in the NPR system, classical music is the most common format. Arbitron research shows that classical music has a larger audience than local news/talk programs.

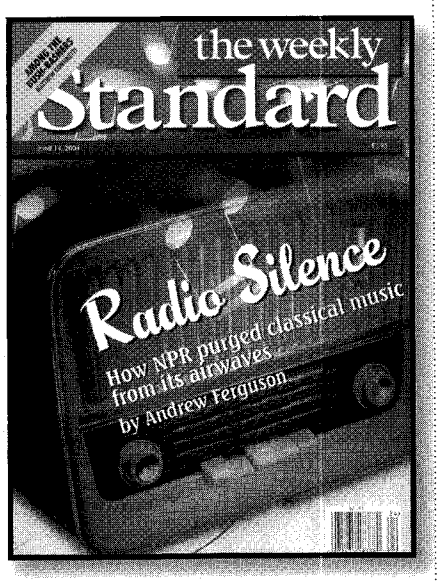
Overall, audiences to NPR and member stations have skyrocketed in the past decade, from 14.7 million to 29.3 million weekly listeners. They are drawn to public radio's award-winning excellence in fact-based local and national journalism, and our rich diversity of cultural presentations—including classical music.

KEVIN KLOSE
President and CEO, NPR
Washington, DC

IN "RADIO SILENCE," Andrew Ferguson wrongly cites Boston as one of the larger markets that "suddenly finds itself, for the first time in 50 years, without a public radio station that plays classical music."

WGBH 89.7 in Boston presented its inaugural live broadcast of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in October 1951, and more than 50 years later we are still dedicated to presenting these performances on our air. Over 50 hours of our schedule is devoted to classical music each week. It is worth noting that we continually invite both local and national artists and ensembles to perform live in our studio. Many of these performances—from the New England String Ensemble to Yo-Yo Ma—are archived online and are accessible 24/7 at *www.wgbh.org*, enabling us to offer our classical service beyond the Boston area.

WGBH also collaborates with NPR to bring a number of our remote recordings of concerts throughout the region for broadcast to a national audience. We are active participants in New England's vibrant music community



and take great pride in being Boston's NPR arts and culture station.

MARITA RIVERO
General Manager, WGBH Radio
Boston, MA

Mart Talk

IN HIS ESSAY on the struggle between Vermont and Wal-Mart ("Stone Walls and Wal-Mart," June 14), Geoffrey Norman touches upon an issue long neglected by conservatives: sprawl.

As Norman points out, many people simply see sprawl as the consequence of market forces, the result of the natural process of Schumpeterian "creative destruction." Certainly it is important to defend these market forces. But it is equally important to examine, in Norman's words, "what's being destroyed and what is being created." To refuse to consider the social context in which markets occur is to be just as blindly ideological as the utopian left.

In contrast to nearly all other recent conservative commentary on Vermont, Norman's piece was respectful of local concerns, as well as thought-provoking. We can only hope that it will stimulate further debate on the subject of sprawl—and a reconsideration of Wal-Mart's plans for seven big-box stores across our hills.

ALVINO-MARIO FANTINI
Dummerston, VT

Dutch Treat

IN "GOING DUTCH?" (May 31) Stanley Kurtz shows that he does not understand the Netherlands.

First, Kurtz misrepresents the relationship between legal recognition of gay couples and out-of-wedlock births. As Kurtz's own chart shows, the rate of increase in illegitimate births accelerated in 1993, and that rate of increase has held steady ever since. Legal recognition of gay relationships came in 1997. Widespread public acceptance of gay marriage has only happened in the last few years. The recent increase in illegitimate births preceded by several years both legal recognition and public acceptance of gay marriage. It ought not require explaining to a fellow of the Hoover Institution that effects cannot precede their causes.

Kurtz makes two additional errors in his analysis of Dutch history and society. First, he dates the breakdown of the "Three Pillars" of Dutch society—Catholicism, Protestantism, and socialism—to the social turmoil of the 1960s. Any Dutchman will tell you that the Three Pillars model of politics never recovered from the German occupation of World War II. During that period, most Dutch institutions were revealed to be defeatist, collaborationist, or impotent. Only the monarchy and the trade unions survived the occupation with their reputations intact. As a result, post-

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war Dutch politics has been characterized by the "Polder model" of pragmatic consensus-building rather than by the ideological jostling of the Three Pillars.

More fundamentally, Kurtz's argument rests on the notion that the Netherlands is a nation of ideas. Because arguments for gay marriage are based on the idea of the equality of relationships, Kurtz would have us believe, implementing the policy meant accepting the idea.

This might be true in the United States, which is a nation of ideas with a vigorous political life. But the Netherlands is not the United States. Approach any American and call the president a no-good scoundrel and you will probably provoke a passionate response one way or the other. Even Americans who do not vote tend to hold strong opinions about politics, and most Americans are happy to talk at length about those opinions. But approach any Nederlander and call the prime minister a no-good scoundrel and you will probably provoke a shrug and a polite comment about the weather or cheese.

In fact, Dutch acceptance of gay marriage has not been based on an ideological revolution. The Netherlands has not been thinking deeply about the meaning of marriage or the philosophical bases for legally recognizing some relationships but not others. Discrimination against gay couples did not seem to be accomplishing anything worthwhile, and legal discrimination of any sort (unless it is against those who favor discrimination) does not strike the Dutch conscience as a decent thing for government to do.

This is the real paradox of Dutch society that Americans, myself and Kurtz apparently included, find most difficult to understand. Small-"c" conservative values dominate Dutch culture, as they do American culture. But whereas Americans prefer to ban practices that violate community standards, the Dutch prefer to regulate such behaviors. In America, to make something legal is to express the community's approval of the thing. Not so in the Netherlands, where much is allowed that is not accepted.

R. Scott Rogers
Amsterdam

Stanley Kurtz responds: R. Scott Rogers is wrong about the rising Dutch out-of-wedlock birthrate. The rate went up only one percentage point in 1993, 1994, and 1996. The steady increase of two percentage points a year didn't begin until 1997. In any case, the jump of two percentage points in 1995 occurred as the five-year-old campaign for gay marriage was gaining ground. Polls taken in 1995 showed strong public support for gay marriage. Those polls are what got national politicians to shed their caution and move forward with legislation. So acceptance of gay marriage by the Dutch public was growing at the very time the out-of-wedlock birthrate began to rise more rapidly. Opinion on this issue is changed by public debate, not by legislation alone.

Rogers claims the Dutch are too pragmatic to be affected by public debate. It's true that changes in Dutch law don't necessarily signal changes in fundamental outlook. I made that point myself. When the Dutch legally equalized marriage and cohabitation in the 1980s, they did not embrace radical theories of marriage. Yet that fact itself rests on the power of cultural tradition for the Dutch. Given the legal demotion of marriage in the 1980s, and given high Dutch premarital cohabitation rates, scholars agreed that it was only the power of tradition that made the Dutch continue to marry before having children. Sometime in the mid-1990s, that equation began to change.

What changed it? The answer is that the campaign for gay marriage forced the Dutch to draw the radical conclusions of the legislative decisions they had so pragmatically made in the 1980s. A major nationwide campaign for gay marriage, involving all media, centering around symbolic weddings in scores of municipalities, and stirring up debates in legislatures and opinion pages, worked a transformation in public perceptions of marriage that the liberalization of cohabitation law in the 1980s could not. That is why Dutch parents finally shed their traditionalism and began to cohabit in ever-increasing numbers. Merely "pragmatic" accommodation can't go on forever without consequences. In the end, Holland's acquiescence in one radical experiment after another took a toll on its social fabric.

There are the usual rationalizations for parental cohabitation. The children are born to parents who live together, and the parents often marry eventually anyway. But the problem with this is that cohabiting parents break up at two to three times the rate of married parents. That's hardly surprising, since these parents are effectively treating the birth of their first child as a test of their relationship. And Scandinavia shows that once this process begins, it doesn't stop. In Norway cohabiting parents used to marry before the birth of the second child (if they didn't break up first). Now cohabiting Norwegian parents are as likely to have two children as one. Once the connection between marriage and parenthood becomes optional, the institution is set up for slow decline, and eventual collapse.

State of War

I agree with each of the steps listed in William Kristol's "Of Mice and Men" (May 24). And I'd like to add one more: President Bush has to correct the widely held belief that the United States is now performing a peacekeeping operation in Iraq. The implication of this belief is that the war in Iraq is basically over. Yes, there are factions and unruly elements in Iraq that we have to police and keep apart, but there are also thousands of our sworn enemies there whom we still have to engage and destroy. That isn't peacekeeping. It's war.

Max Davies
Celebration, FL

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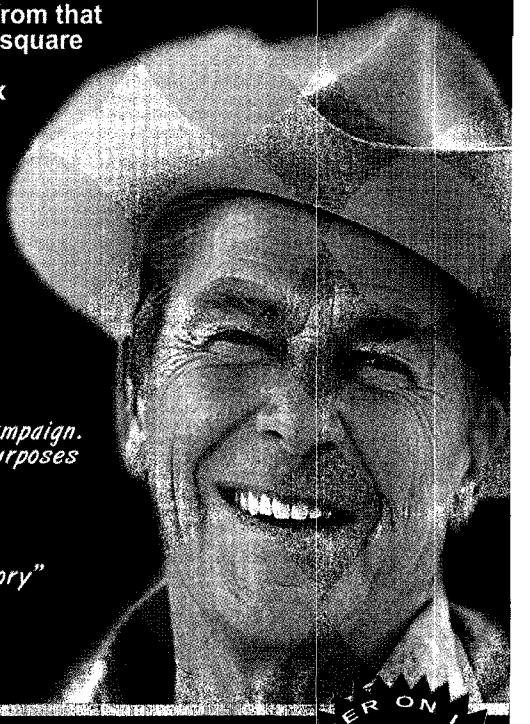

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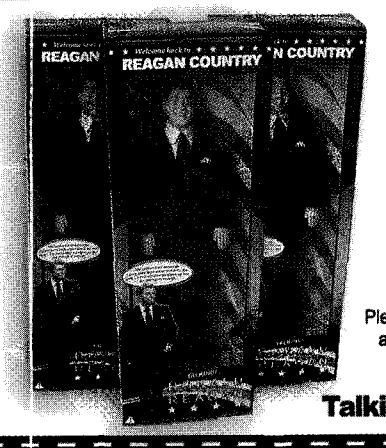

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the weekly Standard

Anti-anti-Saddamism

Perhaps John Kerry simply made the mistake of believing what he read in the *New York Times*. There it was, the lead headline on Thursday, June 17: "Panel Finds No Qaeda-Iraq Tie." Or perhaps he read the *Los Angeles Times* headline: "No Signs of Iraq-Al Qaeda Ties Found." Or the *Washington Post*: "Al Qaeda-Hussein Link Is Dismissed." Or maybe he was watching CBS News the night before, as John Roberts explained that "one of President Bush's last surviving justifications for war in Iraq" took "a devastating hit" as the 9/11 Commission "put the nail in that connection" between Saddam and al Qaeda.

So Kerry pounced. No matter that this coverage ranged from tendentious to false. The Bush administration, he claimed, "misled America." "The administration took its eye off al Qaeda, took its eye off of the real war on terror in Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan and transferred it for reasons of its own to Iraq." And "the United States of America should never go to war because it wants to; we should only go to war because we have to."

This is surely a major moment in the race. John Kerry had, until last week, been carefully suppressing his left-leaning foreign policy instincts.

So we didn't have to go to war against Saddam, and (presumably) shouldn't have. After all, "the real war on terror" is in Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan. And since the Bush administration, Kerry implies, knew perfectly well that there was no link between the "real" terrorists and Saddam Hussein, it went to war to remove Saddam only "because it want[ed] to." The *New York Times* reports, incidentally, that this last line, about the administration "wanting" to go to war, is "one Mr. Kerry has been using with increasing frequency in campaign appearances," and is one that receives "loud applause." Why any administration should "want" to fight an unnecessary war Kerry does not explain. Or does Kerry now agree with his colleague Ted Kennedy that the Bush administration went to war because it knew it "was going to be good politically"?

This is surely a major moment in the presidential race. John Kerry had, until last week, been running a disciplined general election campaign, carefully suppressing his left-leaning foreign policy instincts, soberly emphasizing his commitment to fighting the war on terror and to seeing through the effort in Iraq. Then he couldn't resist the temptation to jump on the (misleading) press accounts of the (sloppy) 9/11 Commission staff report, in order to assault the Bush administration on the issue of terror links between Saddam and al Qaeda.

The Bush administration has fought back. President Bush explained on Thursday, "The reason I keep insisting that there was a relationship between Iraq and Saddam and al Qaeda is because there was a relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda." Vice President Cheney went on television that night to elaborate: "The press wants to run out and say there's a fundamental split here now between what the president said and what the commission said. . . . And there's no conflict. What they were addressing was whether or not [Iraqis] were involved in 9/11. And there, [the commission] found no evidence to support that proposition. They did not address the broader question of a relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda in other areas, in other ways." By the end of the day, 9/11 Commission chairman Tom Kean and vice chairman Lee Hamilton were emphasizing that the commission had never said Iraq-al Qaeda links did not exist. Nor, Hamilton explained, did he "disagree" with Cheney's statement that there were "connections between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's government." The *New York Times*, having asserted on Thursday that the commission's report "challenges Bush," failed on Friday to report this statement of Hamilton's.

Now, as Stephen F. Hayes points out elsewhere in this issue, the staff report is an unimpressive document. It is sloppy and contains errors of commission and especially omission. It doesn't even attempt to deal with the reported presence of an Iraqi official, Ahmed Hikmad Shakir, at a 9/11 planning meeting in Kuala Lumpur in January 2000. It concludes that Mohammed Atta was not in Prague to meet an Iraqi intelligence agent in April 2001, based largely on the fact that his cell phone was used in the United States during those days—even though we know that the plotters shared cell phones among them-

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selves, and that the cell phone in question would have been useless in Europe. (The report says nothing, meanwhile, about Atta's two unexplained but well-documented trips to Prague the previous year.)

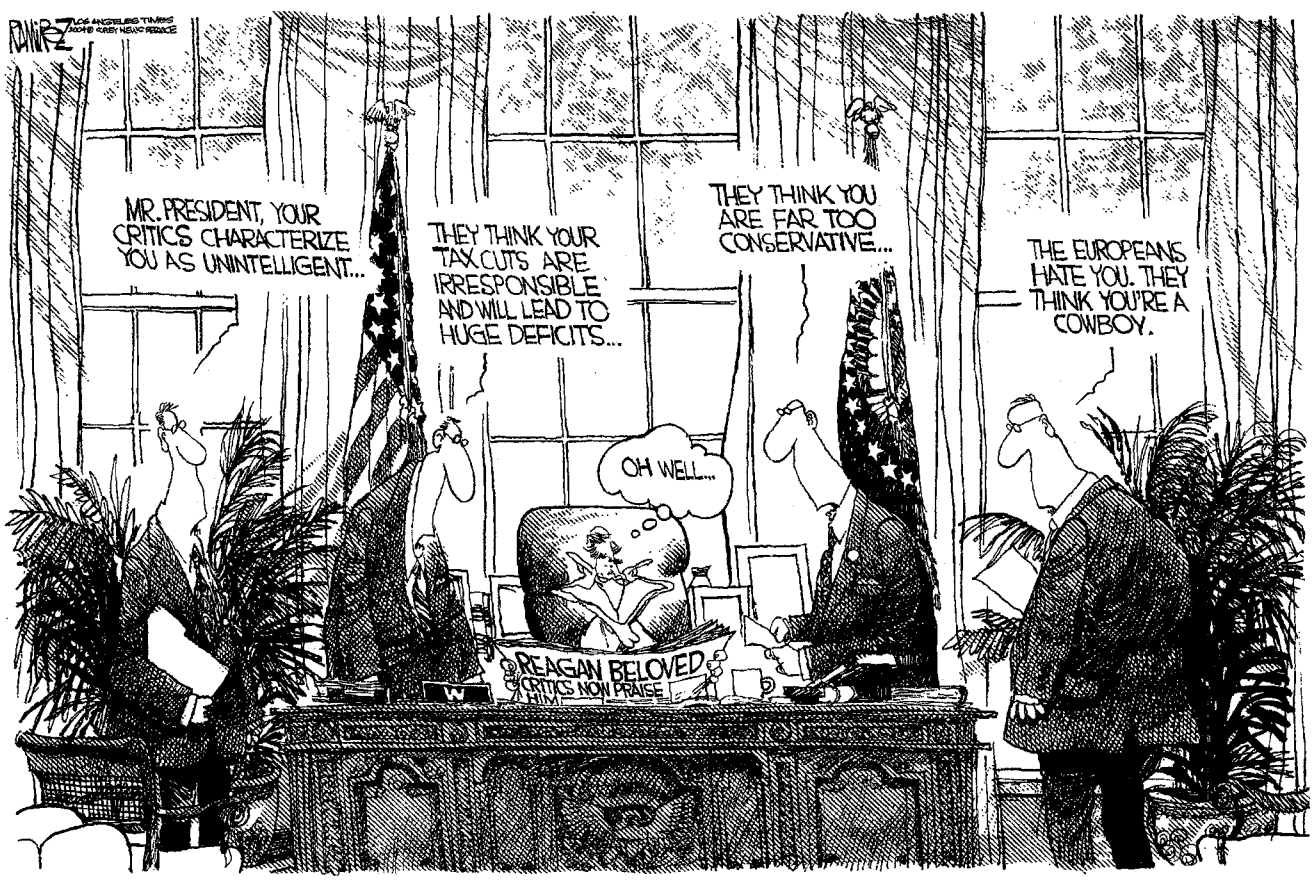
But however blame may be apportioned between the commission's staff report and the media's tendentious coverage of it, Kerry has chosen to enter the fray. So we can now have the fundamental debate the country deserves: Does Kerry deny what the Clinton administration consistently maintained, what the Bush administration asserts, and what appears utterly clear—that Saddam Hussein had ties with terrorists and terrorist groups, including al Qaeda? That Saddam "created a permissive environment for terrorism," as a spokesman for British prime minister Tony Blair put it? No one else denies that the man who mixed the chemicals for the 1993 World Trade Center bomb, Abdul Rahman Yasin, came from and returned to Baghdad, where he lived for the next 10 years. Does Kerry? Does he think Saddam's terrorist ties were so negligible that we could confidently pursue a war on terror without dealing with Iraq? Did the Bush administration simply "want" to go to war in Iraq, as opposed to believing it had a responsibility and duty to do so?

Furthermore: If Kerry had known in October 2002 when he voted to authorize that war what he now knows, would he have voted differently? Does he believe we would have been better off confining the "war on terror" to Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan? Does Kerry disagree with the conclusion of his fellow Democrat, Joe Lieberman, who argued last week that "to call the war in Iraq separate and distinct from the larger war on terrorism is inaccurate. Iraq today is a battle—a crucial battle—in the global war on terrorism"?

Given the 9/11 Commission's account of ties between (Sunni) al Qaeda and (Shia) Hezbollah, and what we now know of A.Q. Khan's nuclear proliferation network that encompassed Sunni, Shia, secular Islamic, and non-Islamic states, wasn't Bush more right than wrong to speak of an "axis of evil" and a network of rogue states and terrorist groups? And, finally: What really is Kerry's view of the war against Saddam? Leave aside all the nonsense about a "rush to war." Does John Kerry now believe we would have been better off to have left Saddam in power in Iraq?

Kerry has tried to avoid directly answering this question. But it's hard to escape the conclusion that he believes the answer is yes. That doesn't mean Kerry is pro-Saddam. It does mean that he is anti-anti-Saddam. And it means that, if John Kerry had been president, Saddam Hussein would still be in power. Suddenly, last week, the choice and the stakes in the presidential race became clearer.

—William Kristol



Michael Ramirez

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The Shrinking Clinton Presidency

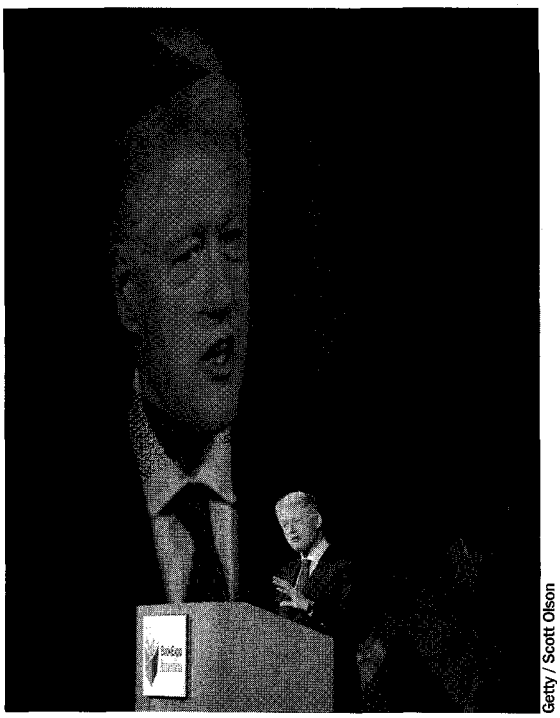
Big book, small legacy.

BY FRED BARNES

A BOOK CANNOT ELEVATE a president. That's true even for a book marketed by Dan Rather for an hour on *60 Minutes*, its publication treated like a show-stopping event by the media, its author's tour seen as the equivalent of a high-octane political campaign, and its importance signified by the expectation of an entire summer in which the author will never be far from the spotlight. Bill Clinton should not get his hopes up. Presidents are judged by their record, not their memoirs. At best, Clinton is Calvin Coolidge without the ethics and the self-restraint.

Clinton is not a failed president, only an insignificant one. In his interview with Rather to plug *My Life*, he claims two great accomplishments. One is "the creation of 22 million jobs." The other is the toppling of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic in the Balkan war. So Clinton takes credit, above all, for high job growth and a positive outcome in a relatively minor foreign policy crisis. One qualification: On jobs, while Clinton deserves credit, presidents merely make jobs a bit easier or harder for the economy to create. They don't create jobs themselves, except by expanding government. In sum, Clinton's twin achievements match Coolidge's almost exactly. The highlights of Coolidge's term were a flourishing economy and triumph in three minor foreign ventures.

Clinton had three major successes in Congress during his eight years in office, but it's no surprise he downplays them. They reflect his weakness as a president. The first was passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993. This measure was proposed by President Reagan, negotiated and signed by the first President Bush, and ratified with Republican votes as congressional Democrats abandoned Clinton in droves. The second was welfare reform that reduced the rolls dramatically. He signed this Republican bill reluctantly in 1996 only after his political adviser, Dick Morris, told him his reelection would be jeopardized if he didn't. The third Clinton success was the arrival of a balanced budget, again a goal Clinton had warily endorsed but not expected to achieve so soon.



Getty / Scott Olson

Clinton at the BookExpo America trade show, June 3

Now consider these achievements for a moment. Do they remind you of anyone's agenda? The answer is Reagan's. All three were longstanding aims of Reagan, not of Clinton or Democrats. Yes, Clinton campaigned in 1992 on changing the welfare system "as we know it." But the bill he was forced to sign cut far more deeply into welfare rolls than Clinton wanted and was fiercely opposed by liberal Democrats. The point is that the Clinton presidency was, in effect, an extension of the Reagan presidency, though Clinton would be loath to admit this. Completing the Reagan agenda was not his intention.

There are three primary methods of assessing, then ranking, a president. None helps Clinton. The first, most-often-applied test, goes like this: Did the president face an unprecedented challenge, did he respond boldly, and was he successful? Because they passed this test so impressively, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt are rated by historians as the top three presidents. Clinton faced no great challenge to which he could respond boldly and successfully. He was president during the period Charles Krauthammer has dubbed a "holiday from history." In fact, Clinton has complained he had no major war or crisis to confront.

The second way to judge a leader comes from the philosopher Sidney Hook. In *The Hero in History*, Hook distinguishes between eventful and event-making leaders. "The eventful man is a creature of events," Hook wrote. The event-making man causes events. "Both the eventful man and the event-making man appear at the forking points of history," Hook wrote. "The event-making man . . . finds a fork in the historical road, but he also helps, so to speak, to create it." Clinton was clearly not an event-making president. And it's a stretch to label him eventful. The two forks he

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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encountered—Medicare and terrorism—he dealt with tentatively.

The third method comes from Fred I. Greenstein, a political scientist at Princeton widely admired for his writings on the presidency. In *The Presidential Difference*, he proposes six measures for appraising the "leadership style" of presidents: public communication, organizational capacity, political skill, vision, cognitive style, and emotional intelligence. Clinton is strong on communication, political skill, and cognitive style (absorbing and using information). On the other three, he falls short. His White House and his personal decision-making style were chaotic. Despite the talk of a "third way" in public policy, he was hardly a visionary. And he stumbled badly on emotional intelligence, which Greenstein describes as "the president's ability to manage his emotions and turn them to constructive purposes, rather than being dominated by them, and allowing them to diminish his leadership." To Greenstein, emotional intelligence is the most important trait of a president. Clinton, he says, "provided a reminder that in the absence of emotional intelligence, the presidency is a defective instrument of democratic governance."

When Clinton encountered two forks in the road, on terrorism and Medicare, he balked. Given the circumstances, that was understandable. But hesitation is not an act of bold leadership. On terrorism, he passed on the opportunity to capture or kill Osama bin Laden as he flew from Sudan to Afghanistan. True, that occurred at a time, before the 9/11 attacks, when the enormity of the threat posed by bin Laden was not yet known. On Medicare, Clinton backed away from a chance to restructure the program and save it for decades to come. But he was beset by impeachment and chose to side with his liberal backers who opposed Medicare reform and were crucial to his staying in office. Thus the decision made political sense. By balking, however, he reinforced the verdict that no book can erase. Clinton was a president of little consequence. ♦

Reagan's Majority

What the Class of '94 learned from the Gipper.

BY NEWT GINGRICH

RONALD REAGAN'S legacy as a party builder has gotten short shrift. The Republicans were able to win a majority in the House in 1994 for the first time in 40 years, and then keep that majority in 1996 for the first time since 1928, because we were close students of Reagan. When House Republicans stood on the Capitol steps in 1994 and announced our Contract With America, we were standing on President Reagan's shoulders. This is not merely a nice phrase. It was true in the issues highlighted, in voter appeal, and in the actual staging of the event.

The issues in the Contract With America were almost entirely derived from Ronald Reagan's speeches dating back into the 1960s. Welfare reform—look at Governor Reagan in 1970 at the National Governors' Conference as the start of a 26-year effort that culminated when President Clinton (having vetoed welfare reform twice) finally signed the welfare reform bill in 1996. Balanced budgets—a thousand Reagan speeches said they were desirable. Tax cuts—they had been the centerpiece of Reagan's economic policies. Stronger defense—again, a key goal of the 1980 Reagan campaign.

The possibility of a Republican majority was a direct result of Reagan's success. In 1974 only 18 percent of the country identified themselves as Republicans. Some people actually talked about the danger of the party's disappearing. Six short years later, Ronald Reagan not only won the election by a surprising margin but also carried the Republicans into control of the Senate and helped them pick up 33 seats in the House. Thanks to the rise of Reagan Democrats and their conversion into Republicans, by 1994 we had enough candidates and enough potential voters to be competitive for the first time since the Great Depression.

And the Capitol steps event itself was modeled on a similar Reagan event. In 1980, Guy VanderJagt, Bill Brock, and I approached Governor Reagan and his campaign about hosting an event in which every federal candidate in the Republican party would be given an opportunity to stand with him on key issues. The result was that in late September every House and Senate candidate stood with Reagan in a national event and made news back home explaining how they agreed with the Reagan platform and disagreed with the liberal platform. The result was a stunning upset as six new Republican senators were elected by a combined margin of less than 75,000 votes. The 1994 Contract ceremony on the Capitol steps was drawn directly from that 1980 experience.

But for years before that victory, the group of young activists in the House known as the Conservative Opportunity Society had studied the successes of President Reagan. Here are the major lessons he taught us:

(1) Cheerfulness can get almost anything done. One of President Reagan's great strengths was his commitment to big ideas and his willingness to remain cheerful no matter what the difficulties were. It made him likable and approachable and easy to support. Despite being the son of an alcoholic father, entering the job market in the Great Depression, and watching his career in movies fade out, Reagan remained a steadfast optimist. That disposition was a tremendous, politi-

Former speaker of the House Newt Gingrich is the author of the Civil War novel Grant Comes East.

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cally potent change from the angry pessimism of traditional conservatism.

(2) Beliefs matter. Watching Reagan stand for the same principles from October 1964 through the end of his presidency 24 years later was an amazing lesson in the power of consistency. He did not swing back and forth with each flurry of news stories or polling data. Instead, Reagan was willing to define a big vision of a bright future and keep repeating it until the country came to share his vision. Reagan did not change nearly so much as the country changed. Our approach to issues such as welfare reform, tax cuts, balancing the budget, military and intelligence strength, and how to govern as a majority were learned from Reagan.

(3) If you convince the American people, they will convince the Congress. The most successful president since FDR (whom he had studied and supported) at moving the American people and getting them to move the Congress, Reagan understood that Washington would reject his policies, but he also was confident most Americans would support them. In 1994, we received the largest one-party increase in votes in an off-year election in American history (9 million extra votes), while at the same time, the Democrats slid by one million votes. The shift of 10 million votes from 1990 to 1994 was not won in Washington. It was won in the precincts of America. Washington then changed in response to that victory.

(4) Ideas can be complex but the language has to be simple. Reagan advocated the economics of von Mises, Hayek, and Friedman, but he did it in simple language. He was always talking to the American people—not to the elites—and that meant the language had to be grasped by them. He understood Margaret Thatcher's proposition that first you had to win the argument, and then you could win the vote. He was prepared to argue over very complex ideas, but he understood that the argument itself had to be simple. Reagan did not dumb down his speeches or turn them into generalities. Indeed, if you read his best speeches, you will be surprised by how many specifics they include. Our greatest political success in the House may have been in 1996 when we won the argument over reforming Medicare and ran nine points ahead of the Republican presidential nominee among seniors. That margin was the key to our becoming the first reelected Republican House majority since 1928. It was a Reaganite victory that came from our being very simple and very clear about our message.

Reuters / Mark Wilson

What Reagan made possible: leaders of the Republican majority, 1997

(5) Movements defeat candidate-centered campaigns. Reagan started the Republican gubernatorial primary in 1966 behind a popular mayor of San Francisco and won decisively. He took on a sitting president (Gerald Ford) in 1976 and almost won the nomination—something no one has done in American history. In all his campaigns, Reagan relied on a broad movement of activist supporters who surrounded and energized the campaign far beyond the reach of the official campaign structure. It was a very different model from the modern centrally controlled consultant-dominated system, and while it was far less efficient, it was far more effective.

(6) Perseverance is indispensable in a leader who would change a country. Think of all the years Reagan spent traveling the country talking to large and small audiences. Imagine the years of doing a weekly radio show while Jimmy Carter presided over a decaying economy and diminishing morale. Imagine the four decades' commitment to the defeat of communism dating back to 1947 when he first encountered Communists in the Screen Actors Guild and began studying what made them favor a totalitarian system. This was a man of enormous patience.

(7) Politics is like vaudeville. No matter how often the entertainer performs, each crowd is seeing him for the first and perhaps only time. This morally obligates the performer to give his best. It was this understanding of a very old tradition that enabled Reagan to be so stunning day after day and event after event. He could take the same cards out of his coat pocket, reshuffle them, and give a speech he had given 30 times but turn it into a sparkling moment for this audience at this moment in this hall. It was that sense of doing your very best in the here and now combined with the depth of thought and preparation behind the cards that made him so powerful a public speaker.

I feel privileged to have supported and worked with President Reagan. I know that without him we would not have had the Contract With America, and we would not have won and kept a Republican majority in the Congress. Conservatives who hope to keep that majority should think long and hard about the lessons President Reagan taught us. ♦

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Democratic Activist

Reagan's other foreign policy legacy.

BY DAVID ADESNIK

A ROMANTIC. A DREAMER. An optimist. A man of conviction. In the few short days since President Reagan left this world, both his admirers and his critics have settled on a short-list of character traits that are supposed to capture his essence. Yet neither Reagan's admirers nor his critics have begun to grapple with the most romantic and optimistic of the convictions that animated his foreign policy—one that still exerts an unparalleled influence on the conduct of American foreign relations. Whenever President Bush describes democracy as a universal aspiration, capable of flourishing even in the desert wastelands of the Middle East, it is Ronald Reagan's voice that he echoes.

In his historic address to the British Parliament at Westminster in the summer of 1982, Reagan foresaw the downfall of the Soviet empire. Much less noticed was his declaration that democracy promotion must serve as the moral and strategic foundation of American foreign policy. Reporters at the time portrayed Reagan's address as an anti-Communist broadside, all but ignoring its positive agenda of promoting human freedom and self-government.

The discussion of Reagan's legacy as an American statesman has focused almost exclusively on the degree to which his diplomacy was responsible for the end of the Cold War. Without intending to do so, participants on both sides of the debate have reinforced the notion that Reagan's legacy is one of tearing down, not one of building up. If so, then Reagan has nothing to teach us about the post-Cold War era.

Yet at Westminster, Reagan was careful to note that the United States' "crusade for freedom" ought not to end once Marxism and Leninism found their place on the ash heap of history. Rather,

> Democracy already flourishes in countries with very different cultures and historical experiences. It would be cultural condescension, or worse, to say that any people prefer dictatorship to democracy. . . . The task I've set forth will long outlive our own generation. . . . For the sake of peace and justice, let us move toward a world in which all people are at last free to determine their own destiny.

Here, sounding almost the same note, is President Bush, in April 2004: "There's a lot of people in the world who don't believe that people whose skin color may not be the same as ours can be free and self-govern. I reject that. I reject that strongly. I believe that people who practice the Muslim faith can self-govern." (It was this Reaganesque turn that elicited George Will's attack on "politicians who short-circuit complex discussions by recklessly imputing racism to those who differ with them.")

The inspiration for Reagan's democratic crusade was the stunning success of elections for a constitutional assembly in El Salvador on March 28, 1982. Journalists and human rights advocates had warned that impoverished and listless Salvadorans would not show much interest in the United States' stage-managed efforts to legitimize a military-dominated junta. Yet on election day, Salvadoran voters flooded the polls despite threats and gunfire from Marxist insurgents determined to discredit the election. After walking for miles to the polls, Salvadorans proudly announced to foreign observers that they were voting for peace and democracy.

Reagan's determination to fight communism and promote democracy in El Salvador remained extremely controversial, thanks in part to pervasive human rights violations by the Salvadoran armed forces. Then, in May 1984, José Napoleón Duarte—an ardent democrat, passionate Christian, and survivor of military prisons—prevailed in El Salvador's first legitimate presidential election. Emboldened by his popular mandate, Duarte moved swiftly to rein in the military and its death squads.

Now what did the *New York Times* have to say about this critical episode in its 10,000-word Reagan obituary? Simply that "in El Salvador, the Reagan administration supported the government against a Marxist insurgency." This sort of small-minded interpretation of the president's motives prevailed throughout Reagan's eight-year struggle to win congressional support for his democratizing initiatives in Central America.

Reagan's own rhetorical excesses played into the hands of cynical critics. In his authoritative history of the Nicaraguan conflict, Robert Kagan writes that the president's description of the contras as "freedom fighters" and "the moral equivalent of the Founding Fathers" became a source of embarrassment in light of the contras' summary executions of prisoners and murder of pro-Sandinista civilians. Nonetheless, Reagan was dead serious when he declared in his 1986 State of the Union address, "Surely no issue is more important for peace in our own hemisphere, for the security of our frontiers, for the protection of our vital interests, than to achieve democracy in Nicaragua."

In time, Reagan's soaring rhetoric had the effect of committing his administration to preside over the

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disintegration of pro-American and anti-Communist dictatorships. The first to fall was the Marcos regime in the Philippines. A staunch supporter of Reagan's efforts to promote democracy in Central America, Indiana senator Richard Lugar led an American delegation to monitor the February 1986 elections in Manila. Even though the administration saddled Lugar's mission with arch-conservative supporters of the Marcos regime, Lugar did not hesitate to report that Corazon Aquino had lost only because of massive fraud. Although the White House resisted at first, the president ultimately found it impossible to withstand the mounting criticism directed at the administration not just from Democrats, but from loyal Republicans such as Lugar. Facing mass protests in the streets of Manila and the loss of American support, Marcos resigned. The next year, Chun Do Hwan stepped down as president of South Korea and Augusto Pinochet held a referendum that empowered Chileans to end his dictatorial rule. In both these cases, the Reagan administration ended up taking the pro-democracy side as a result of pressure from fellow Republicans.

"Let's Rout the Extremes!" A pro-democracy poster from the 1982 Salvadoran elections.

Many Democrats eventually recognized that they shared Reagan's democratic aspirations in spite of their differences with Reagan himself. President Carter's campaign for human rights had prioritized the protection of individuals from arbitrary detention, torture, and summary execution, but Carter also insisted throughout his four years in office that democracy was a human right as well. Thus when Bill Clinton came to office he did not have to turn his back on Carter in order to embrace Reagan's democratic crusade. Instead, Clinton spliced together elements of Carter's and Reagan's respective approaches, resulting in the White House's July 1994 *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake thought of enlargement as the natural successor to the U.S. Cold War strategy of containment. Just as Reagan had at Westminster, Lake described a sort of domino theory in reverse, in accordance with which the "tide of history" would slowly but inevitably sweep away authoritarian governments.

In the summer and fall of 2000, George W. Bush's emphasis on foreign policy humility and aversion to nation-building suggested that Reagan's expansive idealism had not sunk enduring roots in the soil of the Republican party. How, then, did Bush arrive at the conclusion that our national security depends on the spread of democracy and human rights throughout the Middle East?

Without access to the president's innermost thoughts, no one can answer this question. Yet even before September 11, it became apparent that President Bush intended to govern more in the manner of the 40th president than the 41st. Bush made it known that he was an optimist and a man of conviction. His commitment to first principles rather than attention to detail informed his administration's policies. In hindsight, it should not have come as a surprise that Bush responded to the attacks on Washington and New York by calling for "moral clarity" in a Reaganesque manner. As the war in Iraq approached, Bush seemed to grasp almost instinctively, as Reagan had, that idealism and strength do not undermine, but rather reinforce one another.

Bush also resembles Reagan in his weakness. The occupation of Iraq has demonstrated that Bush, like Reagan, is at best unsure of how to implement the ambitious vision he has embraced. As was the case with Reagan and Nicaragua, Bush reiterates his ideals with a tenacity that suggests an inability to recognize his own shortcomings. Then again, there was little reason to believe in 1982 that Reagan's democratic crusade was anything more than a fanciful aspiration. ♦

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Judging Reagan

Did he make a difference on social issues?

BY TERRY EASTLAND

THE TORRENT of commentary on Ronald Reagan's political career has tended to overlook our 40th president's cultural conservatism. It was hard to miss, however, when he captured the presidency in 1980. Writing in *Commentary* a month before the election, political scientist James Q. Wilson observed that "the life and heart" of the Reagan campaign "are not to be found in elite concerns with economic and foreign policy, but in mass concerns with social and moral issues." Wilson identified some of those issues—abortion on demand, rising levels of crime and disorder, unfettered self-expression, secularization of public schools—and noted that many Americans felt they had finally found a spokesman for these concerns in Ronald Reagan. He was pro-life, for school prayer, for the appointment of judicial conservatives, and for "traditional moral values," which, he promised, would be "reflected in public policy."

Wilson saw that "the traditionalists," as he called them, tended to be religious believers, and he drew attention to evangelical Protestants in particular. He was right to do so. After decades of political quiescence, they had become more active by the early 1970s, and in the 1976 election they had faced a choice between a pro-abortion rights Episcopalian (Gerald Ford) and a Southern Baptist (Jimmy Carter) who was not shy about stating his born-again faith. By a narrow margin—52 percent to 48 percent, according to the National Election Survey—evangelicals opted for Ford.

But the majority of evangelicals in the South preferred Carter, helping him win key states. In 1980, many of these pro-Carter evangelicals decided to support Reagan. Pat Robertson, not incidentally, was one of those who moved from Carter to Reagan. Even though he was in a three-way race against Carter and Independent (former Republican) John Anderson, who also spoke of his evangelical faith, Reagan won 60 percent of the evangelical vote. In 1984, against Walter Mondale, Reagan saw that total climb, to 74 percent.

Looking back, you can see that Reagan was the crucial figure in bringing evangelicals solidly into the GOP. In 1988, George H.W. Bush didn't do quite as well with evangelicals as Reagan, yet still he won 69 percent of the evangelical vote. Evangelicals have enabled Republicans to hold the House for 10 years now, and the Senate for eight of them. In 2000, George W. Bush, who is commonly seen as an evangelical, won at least 67 percent of the evangelical vote. (The University of Akron's John Green, who studies the parties and elections, thinks the NES under-sampled evangelicals and that 71 percent voted for Bush.) It's hard to imagine that Bush will fail to win a similarly high percentage of their ballots in his race against John Kerry.

Evangelicals now constitute the largest religious bloc in the electorate, and they are a hugely important force within the Republican party—40 percent of the Bush vote in 2000 came from white evangelicals, more than from any other religious group. Yet it's a mistake to think that Wilson's "traditionalists" have been only or even primarily evangelicals, since they include plenty of mainline Protestants and Catholics (who together gave Bush 42 percent of his vote). Moreover, the best predictor of how people vote may not be which church they go to, but how often they go. As Green's data show, people who attend services at least once a week tend to vote Republican, while those who go less often or not at all tend to vote Democratic.

This religion gap has its roots in the sixties. In 1968 there was no correlation between church attendance and voting behavior. People voted about the same, regardless of how much or little they went to church. And to the extent that the condition of the culture mattered to voters, there was no reason they should have voted differently. As the political scientists Louis Bolce and Gerald De Maio have written, "there was a tacit commitment among elites in both parties to the traditional Judeo-Christian teachings regarding authority, sexual mores, and the family." That commitment on the Democratic side was shattered with the nomination of George McGovern in 1972. Almost by default the GOP drew the interest of religiously observant voters. Yet it wasn't until Reagan that the GOP became the explicitly conservative party on social issues it has remained ever since.

Still, what difference did Reagan make—what difference has his party made—on the social issues? In his 1980 article, Wilson doubted that Reagan could make much of a difference. He agreed that there was a connection between, as he put it, "public governance and private morality." Yet much of what traditionalists objected to, he observed, had been wrought by the Supreme Court (or lower courts). At the top of the list of wrong decisions was *Roe* v. *Wade*, the 1973 case in which the Court declared a right to abortion not found in the text or history of the Constitution. Altering those decisions promised to be most arduous, as consider the supermajorities in Congress needed merely to propose a constitutional amendment. While Reagan spoke out in favor of amendments to protect voluntary school prayer and to prohibit abortion, no

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such amendments, or any others designed to secure goals favored by the traditionalists, were proposed during his two terms. Nor have any been proposed since then, despite the Republicans' dominance of Congress since 1994.

Yet that is not the whole story. Presidents have the authority to nominate judges, and Reagan wound up appointing no fewer than 382, still a record for one president. Through his judges he undertook to influence the direction of the federal courts from top to bottom—to rein in rights-based liberalism and produce a judiciary respectful of the Constitution. You have to go back to FDR to find a president as philosophically purposeful as Reagan was in choosing judges. Nor did conservative judicial selection end with Reagan, for it continued with George H.W. Bush and is now the project of George W. Bush.

It's obviously too early to offer a complete assessment of the impact of the judges appointed by the three presidents. Still, it is safe to say that the lower federal courts have proved significantly more moderate than they would have been had those presidents been less intentional about their judicial selection—or certainly had Democratic presidents been doing the job instead.

As for the Supreme Court, here is where, for the traditionalists, the keenest disappointment lies. Reagan appointed three new justices, Sandra Day O'Connor, Antonin Scalia, and Anthony Kennedy, and George H.W. Bush named two, David Souter and Clarence Thomas. But of the five, only Scalia and Thomas have proved reliable exponents of a jurisprudence of constitutional self-government that would permit traditionalists a voice on the issues that first activated them politically.

A failure of the Reagan presidency—and arguably the greatest victory achieved by the left against it—was the defeat of the nomination of Robert Bork in 1987. That became most apparent in the 1992 case of *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey* when

Zuma Press / Arthur Grace

The Bork announcement; perhaps the most consequential defeat of the Reagan presidency

Kennedy, who took the seat meant for Bork, joined a five-justice majority (with O'Connor and Souter) in upholding *Roe* v. *Wade*. Had Bork been confirmed, the outcome surely would have been different. Likewise, had Bork been confirmed, the Court, with Kennedy writing for a five-justice majority in another 1992 case, would not have extended the school prayer decisions of the early sixties so as to ban prayer at public school graduation ceremonies.

It is also Kennedy who wrote for the Court last year in striking down a state sodomy statute. The result in *Lawrence* v. *Texas* was less important than the reasoning. In *Casey*, Kennedy had written, "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." It was hard to know precisely what this meant (Scalia rightly ridiculed it as the "sweet-mystery-of-life passage"), but it suggested a libertarianism whose defense might require denying the states their traditional authority to regulate "health, safety, and morals." In *Lawrence*, Kennedy declared that the states may not "define the meaning of the 'intimate sexual' relationship or . . . set its boundaries absent injury to a person or abuse of an institution the law protects." Scalia observed of that pronouncement that it "effectively decrees the end of all morals legislation." It remains to be seen how *Lawrence* will play out, though already it has been cited by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in its decision imposing same-sex marriage on the Bay State. Suffice it to say, a leftward, social-engineering opinion like Kennedy's is hardly what Reagan would have wanted from one of his justices.

Reagan did other things on behalf of traditional values (though never enough to satisfy the traditionalists). So did George H.W. Bush, and so has George W. Bush. Examples include a pathbreaking study of the family conducted under Reagan, and the pro-marriage initiative undertaken by George W. Bush. Meanwhile, the need to return to traditional values has been a recurring theme of Republican rhetoric.

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Daniel Patrick Moynihan was famous for, among other wise statements, this one: "The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself." It's fair to say that what Reagan started was a political effort—liberal if you want to call it that—that continues still today to "change a culture and save it from itself." Of course, Reagan himself would not have put the matter that way. He emphasized changing government. But changes in government can affect a culture. And so it is that George W. Bush sometimes seems to borrow from Moynihan. The week before Reagan died Bush told a group of journalists that "the culture needs to be changed," and that it was to help change the culture that "I got into politics in the first place."

The good news is that the culture does seem to be changing—for the better, Anthony Kennedy and the Supreme Court notwithstanding. In the spring issue of *City Journal*, Kay Hymowitz writes, "Americans have been self-correcting from a decades-long experiment with 'alternative values.' Slowly, almost imperceptibly during the 1990s, the culture began a lumbering, Titanic turn away from the iceberg." She points out that "most of the miserable trends in crime, divorce, illegitimacy, drug use, and the like that we saw in the decades after 1965 either turned around or stalled" and that a more "vital, optimistic, family-centered, entrepreneurial, and yes, morally thoughtful, citizenry" is emerging.

Doubtless there are explanations for these developments in addition to politics, and I suspect that they include the influence of traditional religion as well as the sheer exhaustion of trying to live left, by the dim lamp of some alternative value. But I'd guess that Reagan, if he had been told of the positive developments, would have winked and told you that he had fully expected them, all along, and indeed, that even better days lie ahead. ♦

Punitive Liberalism

What Reagan vanquished.

BY JAMES PIERESON

WE HAVE HEARD a great deal in recent days about how Ronald Reagan brought a spirit of optimism to Washington after his election in 1980 and thereby renewed the nation's belief in itself after a period of self-doubt, pessimism, and "malaise." President Reagan said America's best days were still ahead, and he thus renewed our belief in progress and a better future for generations yet unborn. In this sense, he did for the nation in the 1980s what had been done in the 1930s by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who said "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

This narrative about Ronald Reagan is completely accurate, so far as it goes. The problem is that it does not go far enough. Why had Americans become so pessimistic about their country during the 1970s? Why had they been overcome by a sense of "malaise," as Jimmy Carter described it? There was, of course, the long ordeal of Vietnam, followed by Watergate, and then a sluggish economy—reasons enough for Americans to feel some sense of doubt and disappointment. But why was Ronald Reagan able to reverse these doubts when Jimmy Carter could not?

The answer to these questions is that while Americans in general were not down on their country, Jimmy Carter, along with the leaders of the Democratic party and its main constituent groups, certainly was. President Carter could not overcome the "malaise" of the 1970s because he and his fellow Democrats had played a large role in fostering it.

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From the time of John Kennedy's assassination in 1963 to Jimmy Carter's election in 1976, the Democratic party was gradually taken over by a bizarre doctrine that might be called Punitive Liberalism. According to this doctrine, America had been responsible for numerous crimes and misdeeds through its history for which it deserved punishment and chastisement. White Americans had enslaved blacks and committed genocide against Native Americans. They had oppressed women and tyrannized minority groups, such as the Japanese who had been interned in camps during World War II. They had been harsh and unfeeling toward the poor. By our greed, we had despoiled the environment and were consuming a disproportionate share of the world's wealth and resources. We had coddled dictators abroad and violated human rights out of our irrational fear of communism.

Given this bill of indictment, the Punitive Liberals held that Americans had no right at all to feel pride in their country's history or optimism about its future. Those who expressed such pride were written off as ignorant patriots who could not face up to the sins of the past; and those who looked ahead to a brighter future were dismissed as naive "Pollyannas" who did not understand that the brief American century was now over. The Punitive Liberals felt that the purpose of national policy was to punish the nation for its crimes rather than to build a stronger America and a brighter future for all.

Here the Punitive Liberals parted company from earlier liberal reformers such as FDR, Kennedy, and Lyn-

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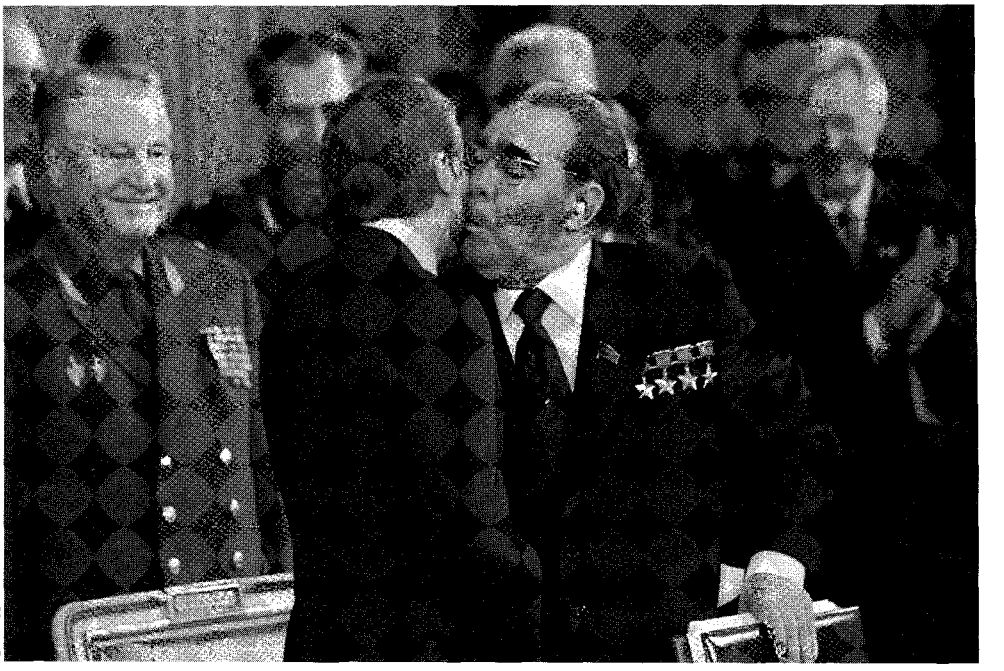
don Johnson, who viewed reform as a means of bringing the promise of American life within reach of more of our people. The earlier reformers believed deeply that the American experiment in self-government was inherently good, and that the task of policy was to improve it. But in the troubled years following Kennedy's death, the reform tradition took on a furrowed brow and a punitive visage.

In many ways, Jimmy Carter, and his leading appointees, were the perfect exemplars of Punitive Liberalism. Given their sour outlook, it is no wonder that their leadership generated a sense of "malaise" among the American people.

During the 1970s an impressive network of interest groups was developed to promote and take advantage of this sense of historical guilt. These included the various feminist and civil rights groups who pressed for affirmative action, quotas, and other policies to compensate women and minorities for past mistreatment; the welfare rights organizations who claimed that welfare and various poverty programs were entitlements or, even better, reparations that were owed to the poor as compensation for similar mistreatment; the environmental groups who pressed for ever more stringent regulations on business; and the various human rights and disarmament groups who pressed the government to punish or disassociate the United States from allies who were said to violate human rights. These groups took up influential roles in the Democratic party and in the Congress, and ensconced themselves in university departments from which outposts they promoted and elaborated upon the finer points of Punitive Liberalism.

The punitive aspects of this doctrine were made especially plain in debates over the liberals' favored policies. If one asked whether it was really fair to impose employment quotas for women and minorities, one often heard the answer, "White men imposed quotas on us, and now we're going to do the same to them!" Was busing of school children really an effective means of improving educational opportunities for blacks? A parallel answer was often given: "Whites bused blacks to enforce segregation, and now they deserve to get a taste of their own medicine!" Do we really strengthen our own security by undercutting allied governments in the name of human rights, particularly when they are replaced by openly hostile regimes (as in Iran and Nicaragua)? "This"—the answer was —"is the price we have to pay for coddling dictators." And so it went. Whenever the arguments were pressed, one discovered a punitive motive behind most of their policies.



CORBIS

Carter and Brezhnev: Why were Americans so pessimistic in the 1970s?

Naturally, it was somewhat difficult to advance the tenets of Punitive Liberalism in the public arena, and especially tricky to do so in electoral contests. The broader public, after all, is unlikely to take kindly to the idea that it needs to be punished for the sins of past generations. For this reason, Vice President Mondale, an experienced politician, felt that Jimmy Carter had made a serious mistake in calling the American people to task for their "malaise," since it is counter-productive for an elected politician to attack the voters. The Punitive Liberals thus chose instead to advance their causes in the regulatory bodies and in the federal courts—the latter being the perfect arena for leveling blame and exacting punishment. And they did so with considerable success.

Their success, however, was the undoing of the nation. The Punitive Liberals, because they sought to cultivate guilt in order to leverage policy, proved incapable of adopting practical measures to strengthen the economy or to advance American power in the world. Such goals, in any case, would have been contradictory to their deeper longings, which were to dispel American pride, and to shrink American ambitions at home and abroad. The Cold War, in particular, seemed to them a pointless struggle between two flawed empires, "two scorpions in a bottle." While they did not wish to see the Communists win, neither were they prepared to swallow the triumphalism that would accompany a victory by the West. A strong economy, meanwhile, would disproportionately reward the rich and the self-contented middle classes—the very groups that the Punitive Liberals wished to chastise.

And thus it was perhaps inevitable that the policies of the Punitive Liberals would give us the worst of all worlds—weakness and embarrassment abroad, inflation and unemploy-

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ment at home, and a public that was beginning to lose hope in its future. By 1980, the nation had seen the results of its experiment with Punitive Liberalism, and was beginning to look for an alternative vision.

Fortunately for all of us, Ronald Reagan stepped into the void and supplied that vision. He understood, more than any other candidate of the time, that the pervasive negativism of the Democratic party was largely responsible for our national difficulties. And thus his pragmatic proposals for tax cuts, deregulation, and defense spending were accompanied with inspiring rhetoric about national pride and a hopeful future.

He stated the matter with abundant clarity in his acceptance speech before the Republican Convention in July 1980:

> The major issue of this campaign is the direct political, personal and moral responsibility of the Democratic Party leadership—in the White House and in Congress—for this unprecedented calamity which has befallen us. They tell us that they have done the most that humanly could be done. They say that the United States has had its day in the sun; that our nation has passed its zenith. They expect you to tell your children that the American people no longer have the will to cope with their problems; that the future will be one of sacrifice and few opportunities.

"My fellow citizens," he continued, "I utterly reject that view. The American people, the most generous on earth, who created the highest standard of living, are not going to accept the notion that we can only make a better world for others by moving backwards ourselves."

Ronald Reagan during the campaign and then in office challenged the leaders who had encouraged the spirit of malaise and doubt. He exposed, confronted, and eventually defeated the bizarre and self-flagellating doctrine of Punitive Liberalism. For this, as for so many other things, he earned the eternal gratitude of the American people. ♦

Bordering on Defeat

Immigrant bashing is for losers.

BY STEPHEN MOORE

IF THERE IS ANY PLACE in America where the anti-immigration message should receive a receptive hearing, it would seem to be Colorado. Few states have been as heavily affected by the influx of immigrants over the past dozen years. The number of immigrants has nearly tripled in that time, and antigrowth and development restrictions are all the rage thanks to the huge population gains (both native-born and immigrant).

Yet every indication is that the closed-border mentality doesn't play well here politically. The *Denver Post* recently reported that proponents of a November ballot initiative to amend the state constitution to prohibit the provision of state services to illegal aliens has fallen with a thud for lack of money.

When Ben Nighthorse Campbell unexpectedly announced his retirement from the Senate and popular GOP governor Bill Owens announced he would not run, many people assumed Rep. Tom Tancredo—by far the best-known member of Colorado's congressional delegation and a solid fiscal conservative—would coast to an easy win in the primary. But Tancredo, the leading anti-immigration voice on Capitol Hill, pulled out. It turns out that while Tancredo's crusade against immigration has gained him a loyal following among like-thinking conservatives, his political negatives are also in the stratosphere.

Yet Tancredo has a broad following among his colleagues on Capitol Hill. His anti-immigration coalition has 69 mostly conservative Republican members. These Republicans favor an outright moratorium on all immigration—legal and illegal.

One of the few in the party who adamantly rejects this notion is George W. Bush. Immigrants are assets, not liabilities, says Bush. He's right, of course, but when the White House unveiled his immigration reform proposal back in January, the plan was lambasted as "amnesty" by his conservative critics and has not even found a congressional sponsor. Bush has come under attack for being "soft on illegal immigration," and this has wounded the Bush-Cheney team with its conservative base.

To preempt such attacks, the plan certainly should have emphasized security issues more prominently. But the gist of the president's proposal is economically wise, politically sensible, and humane. He would try to reduce illegal immigration by introducing a guest worker program so that migrant workers can come through the border lawfully to do the agricultural work they've been doing for 200 years; he would create an earned legalization program for those 8 million illegal immigrant workers already here; and most important he would preserve the legal immigration visa system, so that lawful channels remain open and accessible to those around the globe who aspire to become Americans. The big benefit of the White House plan is that it would allow workers to come and contribute their talents and admirable work ethic, while allowing border security and law enforcement officials to concentrate their re-

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sources on keeping out undesirables: potential terrorists, criminals, and public welfare claimants.

So Republicans are now torn between divergent ideologies on immigration—a nativist stand represented by Tancredo and a welcoming one represented by Bush. The tensions are palpable. Pat Buchanan, who wants to bar as many people and goods from coming into the United States as possible, predicts "another Goldwater moment in the Grand Old Party, like 1960, when the grassroots began to rumble and rise in rebellion. . . . Immigration is the most explosive [issue], as is seen in the stunning recoil to Bush's amnesty early this year."

But if conservatives are "recoiling" from what Buchanan calls the "immigrant invasion," where is the electoral evidence? (Buchanan himself, recall, mustered a grand total of 1 percent of the presidential vote in 2000.) The answer is that there is none. In virtually every congressional race in recent years where the issue came up, it has been the candidate who wants to drape a "No Admittance" sign over the Statue of Liberty who lost the election—even in Republican primaries.

Restrictionist themes have been tried many times over in the wake of the 9/11 attacks (as if denying visas to Mexican migrant workers were going to protect us from al Qaeda). On almost every occasion the seal-the-border candidates have fallen. Last year, it was state representative Carl Isett in Texas's 19th congressional district, running in a special election. This March, it was hard-charging, dynamic state senator Rico Oller in the GOP primary in the third district of California who hammered Dan Lungren mercilessly for supporting "amnesty" in the mid-1980s. Lungren won.

Most recently, in the Republican primary in Illinois, Senate candidate Jim Oberweis spent millions of dollars on immigrant-bashing TV and radio ads but still finished a distant second place, to Jack Ryan, who is pro-immigration.

Buchanan touts upcoming GOP primaries in Arizona and Utah in the coming weeks, where anti-immigration zealots backed by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) are hoping to oust pro-immigration incumbent congressmen Jeff Flake, Jim Kolbe, and Chris Cannon. Their alleged sins: endorsing the Bush "amnesty" and alleged political indifference to the tide of illegal immigration. Despite all of the hullabaloo, all three are expected to win their races with relative ease.

Even though the nativists almost never win at the ballot box, the anti-immigration forces contend that our immigration policies are being foisted upon Americans by political elites standing athwart the overwhelming desires of citizens. Groups like FAIR love to trot out polls every few months showing that by about a 2-to-1 margin, voters say they want less immigration. But as American University professor Rita Simon has shown in her book *Public Opinion and the Immigrant*, for the last 100 years, with rare exceptions, Americans have *always* said they favor fewer, not more, immigrants.

Unsurprisingly, Americans have complicated and even internally conflicting views on immigration. Republican pollster Ed Goeas reports that voters simultaneously want fewer foreigners admitted and yet are extraordinarily respectful and proud of our unique "nation of immigrants" status. They fear that immigrants take jobs from Americans and collect welfare, but they also agree that immigrants are hard-working, trustworthy, and take jobs Americans won't do. They fear "mass immigration" but have a very high opinion of the immigrants they know personally.

In some ways the politics of immigration is similar to the politics of free trade. In some local markets with dying industries and lost jobs, protectionism is a political winner. At the statewide level, and much more clearly at the national level, free trade is a political necessity—nationwide, the consumer benefits trump the localized losses. Moreover, anti-immigration, anti-trade candidates expose themselves as fearful of the future and fearful of America's ability to compete and win. These are unattractive traits to voters.

A final political argument is made by GOP restrictionists: that by allowing in ever more immigrants each year, Republicans are committing electoral suicide. Peter Brimelow, the author of *Alien Nation*, argues that the increased immigrant populations over the next 20 years will surely make the GOP a permanent minority party, as new ethnic voters tilt close elections into the Democratic camp. Political analyst Dick Morris says that in 10 years, the increased Latino vote will make the GOP uncompetitive in presidential elections.

The problem with this analysis is that if Republicans try to pull up the drawbridge and say no to immigration, they will surely alienate the millions of Latino and Asian voters who are already here—not to mention middle-of-the-road voters who don't want to be perceived as "mean-spirited." The big tent starts to collapse if the message to ethnic Americans is: We don't want any more people who look, speak, or act like you. The difference between Republicans winning 40 percent of the immigrant vote and 30 percent is huge in electoral politics: It is what separates victory from defeat in almost every important battleground state and district. Moreover, as Michael Barone points out, immigrants assimilate politically over time just as they assimilate socially and economically. Those who argue that immigrants will always vote Democratic are guilty of static analysis. If the premise were true, Republicans would *never* win any elections, since tens of millions of voters are already immigrants or children of immigrants.

What seems undeniable is that Americans almost universally want something done about illegal immi-

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gration. What irritates most Americans about the immigration system, and this is particularly true of conservative Republicans, is their sense that the border is out of control; that we reward lawlessness; and that illegal immigrants flout the rules, enter the nation illicitly, stay with impunity, and get public benefits while they are here. The Bush plan, as it happens, would do more to reduce illegal immigration than any other serious alternative. Allowing migrant workers to work lawfully would make the border substantially more manageable.

Moreover, Republicans can maintain their pro-immigration roots, back some version of President Bush's plan, and still aggressively attack the left's lunatic ideas on immigration. For example, Republicans should oppose giving drivers' licenses to illegal aliens (which is part of a liberal scheme to allow them to vote), granting in-state tuition for illegals, bilingual ballots, and bilingual education programs. Arnold Schwarzenegger got a massive political boost in his race for the California governorship by endorsing and later signing legislation to ban drivers' licenses for illegal aliens.

A famous *New Yorker* cartoon shows two Indians peering through some bushes on a beach as the *Mayflower* comes to rest on the shore. One says to the other: "Looks like we're going to need an immigration policy." So do Republicans today. Most Republicans would love for the immigration issue to just go away. It won't. The party needs a coherent, economically sensible, and, yes, compassionate program for those who want to become Americans. President Bush, for the most part, has one. If this year's presidential election again turns into a national dead heat, the four western states where Latino votes are high or sharply rising—Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and Colorado—could well turn out to be the balance of power. Pro-immigration politics may once again hold the key to the future politics of our immigrant nation. ♦

Democracy in Arabia?

Liberal scoffers underestimate its prospects.

BY AMIR TAHERI

AT THE CLOSE of the recent G-8 summit in Sea Island, Georgia, sighs of relief could be heard in palaces across the Middle East where unelected leaders wield near-absolute power.

The summit had been expected to produce a clarion call for reform in the only part of the world still largely unaffected by changes that have reshaped global politics since the end of the Cold War. Instead, it settled for a string of bland admonitions.

Anxious to avoid fresh charges of unilateralism, and responding to demands from French president Jacques Chirac and German chancellor Gerhard Schröder, President Bush toned down his call for a democratic revolution in the greater Middle East.

But though the message from Sea Island has disappointed many moderates in the region, the process of change triggered by the liberation of Afghanistan and Iraq shows no sign of coming to a close. In liberal circles in Europe and North America, the idea that George W. Bush could inspire any democratic revolution may provoke derision, but in the Middle East, U.S. action in Afghanistan and Iraq is seen as marking the end of an era—the era in which the region's politics was dominated by pan-Arabism and Islamism.

The Taliban was the epitome of Islamism: No one could claim to be more Islamist than Mullah Muhammad Omar. The Iraqi Baath represented the most radical version of Arab nationalism, inspired by Nazism and communism. If anybody could have created the pan-Arab Utopia, it was Saddam Hussein. The defeat of those two "models" has given democrats in the Muslim world a chance to get their message through to the masses previously captivated by Islamism and pan-Arabism.

"The genie will not return to the bottle," says Iraqi scholar Faleh Abdul-Jabbar. "There is a growing feeling in the region that the days of despotic regimes are numbered."

"The thing is, this is open debate that wasn't there three or four months ago," Jordan's King Abdullah told the *Washington Post* last week. "Once you open that door, it is very hard to shut it. So countries that are resistant to it are now having to look at the issues of reform."

One reason for this optimism is the belief that the Bush administration is determined to shift the United States from being a supporter of the status quo in the Middle East to being a champion of democratic change.

"The United States understands that its security is contingent on change in the Middle East," says Saudi novelist Turki al-Hamad. "The Americans have learned that as long as our societies are not reformed, they cannot be safe."

During the past few months the Muslim world has witnessed a series of conferences devoted to reform, change, and democratization.

Last month's Arab League Summit in Tunis, though it avoided the word democratization, approved a set of changes designed to broaden the base of political decision-making. A couple of weeks before that, the issue had topped the agenda of a major regional conference in Jordan. Similar confer-

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ences have been held in Kuala-Lumpur, the Malaysian capital, the Yemeni capital of Sanaa, the Lebanese capital Beirut, Turkey's cultural capital Istanbul, and Alexandria in Egypt. All these conferences endorsed the clear message that for Muslim nations democratic reform is the only way out of "a historic quagmire."

To be sure, the debate on whether Islam is compatible with democracy is not over. But many in the region believe that the issue now is the necessity of democracy for Muslims rather than its compatibility with Islam.

The fact that almost no one in mainstream Islam regrets the demise of the Taliban and the Iraqi Baath shows that, contrary to claims by some "Islamologists," the overwhelming majority of Muslims do not love despots and are not prepared to fight for them.

Some countries in the region—among them Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman—are already moving towards the open-society model, albeit at widely different paces. All have held elections that, though not free and fair by Western standards, could be regarded as acceptable by the standards of the so-called developing world.

Other countries—notably Saudi Arabia and Egypt—have accepted the need for reform but are trying to limit the power that the ruling elites would have to relinquish to make change meaningful.

The Saudi dynasty has launched a series of "national dialogue" sessions to assess public opinion on reform. The latest, held in Jeddah last week, focused on women's rights and produced 19 demands which, if implemented, could make Saudi women full citizens for the first time. Egypt and Iran are toying with the idea of emulating the so-called Chinese model, combining political repression with economic liberalization. A version of that model is already in place in Tunisia. Still frozen in their despotic ways are Libya, Sudan, and Syria.

Despite a public relations drive to improve his image abroad, Libya's dictator, Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, continues to preside over one of the region's most repressive regimes. In Syria, however, pressure for change is on the rise. Last week a coalition of eight parties called on President Bashar Assad to end the monopoly of its Baath party on political power and accept pluralism "as a principle of national politics."

Most regimes in the region are committed to holding elections in one form or another, abandoning the claim that only informal consultation is acceptable in Islam.

Perhaps more important, words and phrases that denote democratization are being heard in conversations and read in newspapers: opening, dialogue, participation, consent, pluralism, separation of powers, rule of law, due process, free enterprise, civil society, good governance, human rights, gender equality, accountability, and transparency.

Cynics might suggest that all this is nothing but the tribute that vice pays to virtue. The despots may talk of democracy as a tactic to weather the storm created by the liberation of Afghanistan and Iraq, but they will revert to their traditional methods of rule by violence and bribery. And there is, of course, no guarantee that any elections they hold will not be "fixed" to confirm the power of the rulers. Whether the cynics are right depends largely on what happens in Afghanistan and Iraq in the coming months.

The Afghans are scheduled to hold their first-ever free elections in September, followed by the Iraqis, who will go to the polls in January 2005. To be held under international supervision, the Afghan and Iraqi elections could produce the first accurate picture of opinion in two key Muslim countries. As things stand, there is every chance that both elections will be won by moderate conservatives who recognize the importance of power sharing and popular participation in decision-making.

Success in the Afghan and Iraqi elections could help bring Muslim politics out of the palaces, army barracks, mosques, and streets, and direct it into new channels such as political parties, parliaments, and law courts. The tepid message from Sea Island, then, is not the end of the story.

Transforming the greater Middle East from an area of despotism and darkness into one of democracy and development requires the same vision and determination that led the Free World to victory over the Soviet "Evil Empire" less than a generation ago.

The same people who laughed at Ronald Reagan for believing that communism could be defeated now dismiss Bush's call for democratization in the Middle East as another sign of American naiveté. Professional anti-Americans shudder at the thought that "someone like George W. Bush" might actually not only win the war on terror but also help the Muslim nations join the mainstream of global human development. President Bush should trust his instinct and remain committed to helping the Middle East take the path of democratic change. ♦

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There They Go Again

The 9/11 Commission and the media refuse to see the ties between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda.

By Stephen F. Hayes

It's settled, apparently. Saddam Hussein's regime never supported al Qaeda in its "attacks on America," and meetings between representatives of Iraq and al Qaeda did not result in a "collaborative relationship." That, we're told, is the conclusion of two staff reports the September 11 Commission released last Wednesday.

But the contents of the documents have been widely misreported. Together the new reports total 32 pages; one contains a paragraph on the broad question of a Saddam-al Qaeda relationship, the other a paragraph on an alleged meeting between the lead hijacker and an Iraqi agent. Nowhere in the documents is the "Al Qaeda-Hussein Link . . . Dismissed," as *Washington Post* headline writers would have us believe. In fact, Staff Statement 15 discusses several "links." It never, as the Associated Press maintained, "bluntly contradicted" the Bush administration's prewar arguments. The *Los Angeles Times* was more emphatic still: "The findings appear to be the most complete and authoritative dismissal of a key Bush administration rationale for invading Iraq: that Hussein's regime had worked in collusion with al Qaeda."

A complete dismissal? Only for someone determined to find a complete dismissal. The major television networks and newspapers across the country got it wrong.

By Thursday afternoon, the misreporting had become too much for some members of the 9/11 Commission. Its vice chairman, former Democratic congressman Lee Hamilton, defended Vice President Dick Cheney against his attackers in the media:

> I must say I have trouble understanding the flak over this. The Vice President is saying, I think, that there were connections between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's government. We don't disagree with that. What we have said is just what [Republican co-chairman Tom Kean] just said: We don't have any evidence of a cooperative or collaborative relationship between Saddam Hussein's government and al Qaeda with regard to the attacks on the United States. So it seems to me that sharp differences that the press has drawn, that the media has drawn, are not that apparent to me.

Hamilton is half-right. The report was far more nuanced and narrowly worded than most news reports suggested. But while nuance is a close cousin of precision, it is not the same thing. And the two paragraphs on the Iraq-al Qaeda relationship are highly imprecise. Statement 15 does not, in fact, limit its skepticism about the Iraq-al Qaeda connection to collaboration on "the attacks on the United States." It also seems to cast doubt on the existence of any "collaborative relationship" (while conceding contacts and meetings) between the two.

This ambiguity, which provided reporters the opening they needed to go after the Bush administration, was a departure from earlier reports of the 9/11 Commission. Most of the staff's investigative work—its careful examination of pre-September 11 air safety procedures, for example—has been both thorough and illuminating. By contrast, the analysis of the Iraq-al Qaeda connection comes off as incomplete, forced, and unreliable. Indeed, at least as regrettable as the misreporting of the newly released staff documents are the gaps in their contents.

Here in full is the relevant portion of Staff Statement 15:

> Bin Ladin also explored possible cooperation with Iraq during his time in Sudan, despite his opposition to Hussein's secular regime. Bin Ladin had in fact at one time sponsored anti-Saddam Islamists in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Sudanese, to protect their own ties with Iraq, reportedly persuaded bin Ladin to cease this support and arranged for contacts between Iraq and al Qaeda. A senior Iraqi Intelligence officer reportedly made three visits to Sudan, finally meeting bin Ladin in 1994. Bin Ladin is said to have requested space to establish training camps, as well as assis-

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tance in procuring weapons, but Iraq apparently never responded. There have been reports that contacts between Iraq and al Qaeda also occurred after bin Ladin had returned to Afghanistan, but they do not appear to have resulted in a collaborative relationship. Two senior bin Ladin associates have adamantly denied that any ties existed between al Qaeda and Iraq. We have no credible evidence that Iraq and al Qaeda cooperated on attacks against the United States.

This brief passage raises more questions than it answers—a point we'll come back to. But it also shatters the myth that religious and ideological differences precluded cooperation between bin Laden and Saddam. Osama bin Laden's 1994 meeting with the "Iraqi intelligence officer"—Farouk Hijazi—is important.

The U.S. intelligence community has long believed that Saddam was willing to use Islamic militants—including al Qaeda—to exact revenge on the United States for his humiliating defeat in the first Gulf War. This belief was more than theoretical. Saddam played host to a wide range of Islamic militants through "Popular Islamic Conferences" his regime sponsored in Baghdad. He gradually Islamicized his rhetoric, incorporated harsh elements of Islamic law into the Iraqi legal code, and funded a variety of Islamic terrorist groups—some quite openly, including Hamas. On August 27, 1998, Uday Hussein's state-run newspaper, *Babel*, proclaimed bin Laden an "Arab and Islamic hero." Jabir Salim, an Iraqi intelligence agent stationed in Prague who defected in 1998, reported to British intelligence that he had received instructions from Baghdad, and $150,000, to recruit an Islamic militant to attack the broadcast headquarters of Radio Free Iraq in the Czech capital. And virtually no one disputes that Saddam offered bin Laden safe haven in Iraq in late 1998 or early 1999.

The chief obstacle to Iraq-al Qaeda collaboration, according to this reasoning, was bin Laden's presumed unwillingness to work with Hussein. Osama had, after all, publicly labeled the Iraqi dictator an "infidel." But in 1993—according to testimony provided by top al Qaeda terrorist Jamal Ahmed Al-Fadl and included in the Clinton administration's formal indictment of bin Laden in the spring of 1998—the Iraqi regime and al Qaeda reached an "understanding," whereby al Qaeda would not agitate against the Iraqi regime and in exchange the Iraqis would provide assistance on "weapons development." The following year, according to Staff Statement 15, bin Laden took the Iraqis up on their pledge. Hijazi told his interrogators in May 2003 that bin Laden had specifically requested Chinese-manufactured antiship limpet mines as well as training camps in Iraq.

It's never a good idea to take detainee testimony as gospel, but Hijazi's account of the meeting has been assessed as credible. As early as 1994, then, Osama bin Laden had expressed a willingness to work with Saddam Hussein. It was the Iraqis, per the 9/11 Commission report, who were reluctant to work with al Qaeda.

But were they?

According to numerous intelligence reports dating back to the Clinton administration, Iraq provided chemical weapons training (and perhaps materials) to the Sudanese government-run Military Industrial Corporation—which, along with Sudanese intelligence, also had a close relationship with al Qaeda. (Jamal Ahmed Al-Fadl and Ali A. Mohamed, two high-ranking al Qaeda terrorists who cooperated with U.S. authorities before 9/11, said Sudanese intelligence and military officials provided security for al Qaeda safehouses and training camps, and al Qaeda operatives did the same for Sudanese government facilities.)

William Cohen, secretary of defense under Clinton, testified to this before the September 11 Commission on March 23, 2004. Cohen was asked about U.S. attacks on a Sudanese pharmaceutical factory on August 20, 1998. The strikes came 13 days after al Qaeda terrorists bombed U.S. embassies in East Africa, killing some 257 people (including 12 Americans) and injuring more than 5,000. The Clinton administration and the intelligence community quickly determined that al Qaeda was behind the attacks and struck back at the facility in Sudan and at an al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan. Almost immediately, the decision to attack the plant outside Khartoum was controversial. The Clinton administration, in its efforts to justify the strikes, told reporters that the plant had strong links to Iraq's chemical weapons program. No fewer than six top Clinton administration officials—on the record—cited the Iraq connection to justify its strikes in response to the al Qaeda attacks on the U.S. embassies. (Some of these officials, like James Rubin and Sandy Berger, now hold top advisory positions in John Kerry's presidential campaign. Kerry, however, now says he was misled about an Iraq-al Qaeda relationship.)

Here is Cohen's response to the 9/11 Commission in its entirety:

But to give you an example, this particular facility [al Shifa], according to the intelligence we had at that time, had been constructed under extraordinary security circumstances, even with some surface-to-air missile capability or defense capabilities; that the plant itself had been constructed under these security measures; that the—that the plant had been funded, in part, by the so-called Military Industrial Corporation; that bin Laden had been living there; that he had, in fact, money that he had put into this Military Industrial Corporation; that the owner of the plant had traveled to Baghdad to meet with the father of the VX program; and that the CIA had found traces of EMPTA nearby the facility itself. According to all the

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intelligence, there was no other known use for EMPTA at that time other than as a precursor to VX.

Under those circumstances, I said, "That's actionable enough for me," that that plant could, in fact, be producing not baby aspirin or some other pharmaceutical for the benefit of the people, but it was enough for me to say we're going to take—we should take it out, and I recommended that.

Now, I was criticized for that, saying, "You didn't have enough." And I put myself in the position of coming before you and having someone like you say to me, "Let me get this straight, Mr. Secretary. We've just had a chemical weapons attack upon our cities or our troops, and we've lost several hundred or several thousand, and this is the information, which you had at your fingertips—you had a plant that was built under the following circumstances; you had a manager that went to Baghdad; you had Osama bin Laden, who had funded, at least, the corporation; and you had traces of EMPTA; and you did what? You did nothing?" Is that a responsible activity on the part of the Secretary of Defense? And the answer is pretty clear.

So I was satisfied, even though that still is pointed as a mistake—that it was the right thing to do then. I believe—I would do it again based on that kind of intelligence.

Given this intelligence—and telephone intercepts cited by unnamed Clinton officials between the plant manager and Emad al-Ani, the head of Iraq's chemical weapons program—one wonders why the Iraq war did not take place in the wake of the embassy bombings in 1998.

The 9/11 Commission staff statement also states that "two senior bin Laden associates have adamantly denied that any ties existed between al Qaeda and Iraq." Leaving aside the fact that this claim plainly contradicts the ties between Iraq and al Qaeda cited in the same paragraph, why are these bin Laden associates deemed credible? As noted, detainee debriefings are best viewed skeptically unless they are corroborated by other sources. In this case, numerous other sources have directly contradicted these claims. Did the commission staff have access to these detainees? Are the two al Qaeda detainees mentioned in the staff statement more credible than those who have reported Iraq-al Qaeda ties? That's certainly possible. But the staff report leaves out any description—to say nothing of names—of these al Qaeda detainees.

Information from al Qaeda detainees is attributed to named sources elsewhere in the 9/11 Commission report, but not in this instance. Why? Readers are left wondering.

Staff Statement 16 briefly assesses the alleged meeting between 9/11 hijacker Mohammed Atta and an Iraqi intelligence official in Prague in April 2001. It says, "Based on the evidence available—including investigation by Czech and U.S. authorities plus detainee reporting—we do not believe that such a meeting occurred."

The report makes no mention of the fact that five senior Czech officials are on record confirming the meeting. In private conversations, some of these officials are less emphatic than their public statements would suggest. Yet when reporters ask about the meeting, the Czechs refer them to their previous public statements confirming the meeting.

And what is the evidence upon which the commission staff bases its conclusion? Articles in the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and the *Washington Post* had reported that the U.S. intelligence community has rental car records and hotel receipts that place Atta in the United States at the time of the alleged meeting. According to senior Bush administration officials, no such records exist, and the commission's report mentions no such documentation. "The FBI's investigation," it says, "places [Atta] in Virginia as of April 4, as evidenced by this bank surveillance camera shot of Atta withdrawing $8,000 from his account. Atta was back in Florida by April 11, if not before. Indeed, investigation has established that on April 6, 9, 10, and 11, Atta's cellular telephone was used numerous times to call Florida phone numbers from cell sites within Florida. We have seen no evidence that Atta ventured overseas again or reentered the United States before July, when he traveled to Spain and back under his true name."

So contrary to previous reporting, Atta cannot be definitively placed in the United States at the time of the alleged meeting. Cell phone records are interesting, but hardly conclusive. It is entirely possible that Atta would leave his cell phone behind if he left the country. In any case, the hijackers are known to have shared cell phones.

More disturbing, however, is what the commission staff left out. Staff Statement 16, which purportedly provides the "Outline of the 9/11 Plot," offers a painstakingly detailed account of Atta's whereabouts in the months leading up to 9/11. But it contains a notable gap: The report makes no mention of a confirmed trip—technically, two trips—that Atta made to Prague. (This omission comes despite the fact that the report notes other travel by the hijackers—even trips of unknown significance. Marwan al Shehhi, we are told, took "an unexplained eight-day sojourn to Casablanca.")

Atta applied for a Czech visa in Bonn, Germany, on May 26, 2000. He was apparently one day late. His subsequent behavior suggests that he needed the visa for a trip scheduled for May 30, 2000. Although his visa wasn't ready by that date, Atta took a Lufthansa flight to Prague Ruzyne Airport anyway. Without a visa, Atta could go no farther than the arrival/departure terminal; he remained in this section of the airport for nearly six hours. After returning to Germany, Atta picked up his new visa in Bonn and on June 2, 2000, boarded a bus in Frankfurt

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bound for Prague. After the approximately seven-hour trip, Atta disappeared in Prague for almost 24 hours. Czech officials cannot find evidence of his staying in a hotel under his own name, suggesting he registered under an assumed name or stayed in a private home. Atta flew from Prague to Newark, New Jersey, on June 3, 2000. Al Shehhi, a fellow hijacker, had arrived in Newark on May 29, 2000.

What was Atta doing? That's unclear. But he went to some lengths to stop in Prague before traveling to the United States. By leaving this out, the 9/11 Commission report seems to suggest that it is irrelevant.

Another omission: Ahmed Hikmat Shakir. Shakir, as WEEKLY STANDARD readers may recall, is an Iraqi who was present at the January 2000 al Qaeda planning meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. U.S. intelligence officials do not know whether Shakir was an active participant in the meeting, but there is little doubt he was there.

It's unclear what Atta was doing. But he went to some lengths to stop in Prague before traveling to the United States. By leaving this out, the report seems to suggest that it is irrelevant.

In August 1999, Shakir began working as a VIP greeter for Malaysian Airlines. He told associates he had gotten the job through a contact at the Iraqi embassy. In fact, Shakir's embassy contact controlled his schedule—told him when to report to work and when to take a day off. The contact apparently told Shakir to report to work on January 5, 2000, the same day September 11 hijacker Khalid al Mihdhar arrived in Kuala Lumpur. Shakir escorted al Mihdhar to a waiting car and then, rather than bid his guest farewell, jumped in the car with him. The meeting lasted from January 5 to January 8. Shakir reported to work twice after the meeting broke up and then disappeared.

He was arrested in Doha, Qatar, on September 17, 2001. Authorities found both on his body and in his apartment contact information for a number of high-ranking al Qaeda terrorists. They included the brother of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Abu Hajer al Iraqi, described by one detainee as Osama bin Laden's "best friend." Despite this, Shakir was released from custody. He was detained again on October 21, 2001, in Amman, Jordan, where he was to have caught a flight to Baghdad. The Jordanians held Shakir for three months. The Iraqi regime contacted the Jordanian government and either requested or demanded—depending on who you ask—his release. The Jordanians, with the apparent acquiescence of the CIA, set him free in late January 2002, at which point he returned to Baghdad. Then earlier this spring, Shakir's name was found on three lists of the officers of Saddam's Fedayeen.

It's possible, of course, that there is more than one Ahmed Hikmat Shakir. And even if the Shakir listed as an officer of the Saddam Fedayeen is the same Shakir who was present at the 9/11 planning meeting, it does not mean that the Iraqi regime helped plan or even had foreknowledge of those attacks.

But how can the 9/11 Commission staffers dismiss any potential Iraqi involvement in the 9/11 attacks without even a mention of Ahmed Hikmat Shakir?

By week's end, several 9/11 panel commissioners sought to clarify the muddled report. According to commissioner John Lehman on Fox News, "What our report said really supports what the administration, in its straight presentations, has said: that there were numerous contacts; there's evidence of collaboration on weapons. And we found earlier, we reported earlier, that there was VX gas that was clearly from Iraq in the Sudan site that President Clinton hit. And we have significant evidence that there were contacts over the years and cooperation, although nothing that would be operational."

Commissioner Slade Gorton supports Lehman's comments, adding, "The Democrats are attempting to say that this gives the lie to the administration's claim that there was a connection between 9/11 and Saddam," he said. "But the administration never said that."

The 9/11 Commission will be releasing its report later this summer. Let's hope that that final product is more thorough and convincing than the latest staff statements. What it must do is credibly address the events that are plainly within the commission's purview—including any evidence, from Prague or Kuala Lumpur or elsewhere, of potential Iraqi involvement in 9/11.

When it comes to the broader question of the relationship between Saddam and al Qaeda, the commission cannot be expected to write the definitive history. In the end, it will be up to the Bush administration to make available to the public as much intelligence as possible without jeopardizing sources and methods. Americans are not idiots. They can be expected to grasp the difference between circumstantial evidence and proof; between shared goals and methods and a proved operational alliance. They can accept that not all analysts will agree, and some facts will remain elusive. What they should not have to settle for is the current confusion. ♦

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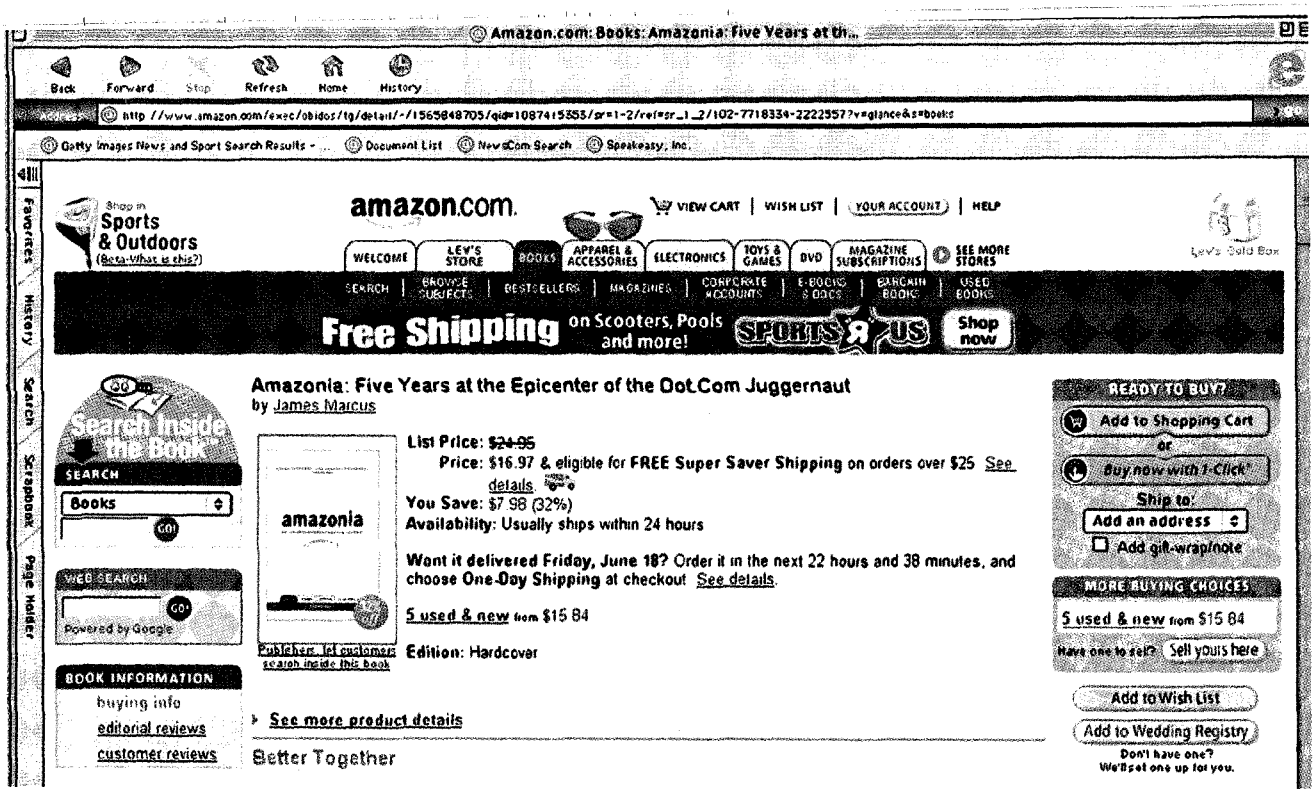

Bookies

The Amazon.com boom By Thomas Mallon

Only a few years ago I was still telling my creative-writing students to think about moving to Seattle—advice offered on the old Trollopian principle that novels should reflect "The Way We Live Now." Things were happening in Seattle, as surely as they once had in Flanders Fields or Levittown. Why miss out?

I can't say I've ever seen a truly good dot-com novel, but I no longer feel deprived. With *Amazonia: Five Years at the Epicenter of the Dot.Com Juggernaut*, James Marcus has written the sort of book I was imagining—even if it has, as Henry Kissinger might say, "the added advantage of being true." This memoir of the author's life and cyber times is as fine a guide to the late 1990s world of Pioneer Square and Pike Street as we are likely to see.

In 1996, at age thirty-seven, Marcus was living in Portland with his wife and young son, translating Italian literature and freelancing "not only book reviews but also articles on jealousy, dental malocclusion, writer's block, hypnosis, and aluminum smelting." Presented with a chance to write reviews—in great quantity—for "Earth's Biggest Bookstore," just recently born in Jeff Bezos's garage, Marcus examined his artistic conscience and searched his mind for highbrow Stakhanovite precedents:

Amazonia
Five Years at the Epicenter of the Dot.Com Juggernaut
by James Marcus
New Press, 261 pp., $24.95

"Samuel Johnson dictating the *Rambler* essays directly to the printer. Balzac with his coffee . . ." Probably from the start, though, he knew he would say yes, "the only word in a freelance writer's vocabulary."

And yet, Marcus had a pinch of real Miranda-like wonder when he moved up to Seattle and first gazed upon Amazon, then shipping only about 2,000 books a day and still with few enough employees that the newest of them could have *james@amazon.com* for his email address. The happy part of Marcus's tale takes place in what he calls "the Golden Age of Content," when he and the elfin, erudite Kerry Fried helped to create the company's literature pages. Together, they cooked up author interviews, contests, lists of bests, and favorites—features that soon attracted the participation of cultural totems from John Updike to Salman Rushdie. Along with publicity, the features captured hundreds of thousands of email addresses from the curious, "thereby propping the door open for future communiqués" from Amazon to all of them.

Single-paragraph squibs that Marcus wrote for the book-of-the-day slot may have amounted to "the haiku of book criticism," but these online utterances could enlarge a midlist author's sales to epic new proportions. What worked in some cases (Andrea Barrett's *Voyage of the Narwhal*) didn't in others (a posthumous collection of Randall Jarrell's essays), but Marcus and Fried always

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Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon.com

Both pictures: CORBIS.

had a better chance of making *something* happen than most publishers' let's-see-what-sticks-to-the-wall marketing departments.

During that golden age, Amazon's Seattle offices became a standard stop on the literary novelist's book tour. I remember being there early in 2000, a few days after riding my own dot-com bubble. Fried had given every electronic goose she could think of to my book *Two Moons*—listing it, for example, for some heady days, as the no. 1 recommended title on the Literature & Fiction list. A friend called one afternoon during all this to tell me that my Amazon sales rank—out of all the books in the world, or almost—was 144. It would have taken a saint of authorial disinterestedness not to log on at this point, so I did.

"Hour by hour," says my diary for February 21, 2000, "I watched it climb—to 101, ahead of Updike [*Gertrude and Claudius*], to 85, to 66, past Doctorow [*City of God*] to 53." My giddiness subsided, about as fast as my ranking, when my level-headed editor assured me that all this activity—in the precincts of "literary fiction," remember—represented "tens of books." Still, I've always felt I had my moment in the now-busted New Economy.

Marcus and Fried's fame spread. They were noticed by CNN and French television, and even if the caption beneath their picture in *Time* managed to get both their names wrong, they could take pride in what content-providing had done for their own literary sense of self: "It made us feel much, much better about the e-commerce mark of Cain on our foreheads," writes Marcus.

Alas, while Jeff Bezos liked to say, "It's always Day One at Amazon.com," there inevitably came a change of season, what might be called the winter of their nix-content, in which begins the sadder part of Marcus's story. The signs appeared early enough: Employees began having to wear badges and were put through the "reorg" of an outfit that had once taken pride in having little organization at all. The warehouse grew to 93,000 square feet, and the company was soon taking publishers' "co-op" advertising to push particular titles—as if it were, well, any other bookstore. The MBAs had arrived, determined to "monetize those eyeballs" clicking on to the site, and get them to feast on all the nonprint products Amazon was now selling.

Marcus doesn't have the heart to dwell on this diversification for very long, with good reason. Once "Books" became just one tab amidst a whole online megamall of lawn furniture and coffeemakers, something went out of the site forever—at least for those eyeballs that had discovered it, in its infancy, as a paradise of print. Books started to seem the least of it, a momentary indulgence the patron would be allowed before being hustled on to the business of real, big-ticket shopping. "If a customer comes to the site looking for a book, that's great," an overlord from the new consumer-electronics division explained to Marcus and Fried. "But we also want you to sell them a DVD player."

The earliest suggestions for further shopping, in the way of proffered hotlinks to Amazon's auction area, weren't just presumptuous; they were free-associative to the point of stupidity. Buyers of *Two Moons*, for example, were invited to purchase not only my previous novels (no complaints there), but also a $6.50 piece of jewelry called a "Moon Pendant." (Fans of Peter Gay, Marcus tells us, were asked if they'd like to add *Blueboy* magazine to their electronic cart.) These days, when I log on to Amazon, I'm ushered toward "Thomas's Store," the weirdly intimate name for an array of consumables the company flings together with its "personalization engine." Marcus says that the programs creating these one-of-a-kind bazaars have gotten a lot better since the time when, "If you bought a guide to Poland for an impending vacation, you would have titles on vodka and Thaddeus Kosciusko thrust in your face until the day you died." When it comes to Thomas's Store, I'd say any improvement has been pretty slight; either way, this noodgy boutique seems to take the browsing out of one's browser.

After concluding that content was cost-ineffective, Amazon's MBAs solved the problem by outsourcing it. To the customers. The old shrug that "everyone's a critic" became the literal, prolix truth when the company's managers decided to "shift the emphasis" away from Marcus and Fried to the Common Reader, who was no longer, in all cases, the solid, sensible creature who'd gotten that title from Dr. Johnson and Virginia Woolf. Dispensing or withholding their one-to-five scale "stars," these everyman Menckens tended to make up in passion what they lacked in orthography. Rave notices for a novel misname its characters and mangle its plot, while pans—instead of wrapping the next day's fish—are left to hang in the ether, to an author's distress, for years after they've been posted. (I remember one guardian of the public taste reporting that she'd had to apologize to her dissatisfied book club for having recommended that they read a novel of mine.)

One always surmised that a lot of five-star encomia really came from the author's own keyboard; the suspicion proved true early this year when a server malfunction briefly revealed the anonymous reviewers' identities. Needless to say, the same glitch provided a converse revelation—that some negative "customer" comments were really cloaked

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The shipping room at Amazon.com

vendettas. (Not for these authors the manly, face-to-face action of Richard Ford: This March, after two years of waiting for his opportunity, the Pulitzer Prize-winner literally spat on the writer Colson Whitehead for a review Whitehead had given Ford's stories in the *New York Times Book Review*.)

Marcus is such a decent, bibliophilic fellow that his being at Amazon never really was about the money, except to the extent that the job meant he would no longer have to scoop coins from an old Tupperware stash to pay for his little boy's flu medicine. The yea-saying freelancer having his first interview with Bezos didn't even know what a hedge fund was, let alone that, as one of the company's early stakeholders, he himself would in a few years' time be possessing nine million dollars' worth of stock options. Nor did he know that he would hold on to them for too long, and then not long enough, selling short his financial future at just the wrong moment. He tells the whole tale of his virtual "lost riches" quite early in the book, jumping chronology in order to get this part of the story out of the way—perhaps because it's still too painful for him to dwell on, but mostly, I think, because he knows it's a subject that nice people (if that term still means anything) might find a little vulgar.

Amazonia is the antidote to David Denby's account of the dot-com boom in *American Sucker*. *Amazonia* is modest rather than manic, reticent instead of compulsively confessional. The author's troubled marriage and eventual separation are made more poignant by the sketchy discretion with which they're rendered. Afraid of losing his bearings as he rides the juggernaut of his subtitle, Marcus begins a prolonged reading of Emerson. By this point the reader may be thinking, "Hasn't he already suffered enough?" But the author perceives a connection between the web and Transcendentalism (both are "a rebuke to the very idea of physical reality"), and finds "a perfect companion" in Emerson's work. His "lofty, inept, semi-comical detachment," Marcus observes, "was something I understood."

"Lofty" and "inept" I'll leave to the Sage of Concord, but semicomical detachment (coupled with sadness) is what makes *Amazonia* work. The book has a lightly worn erudition and a witty line-by-line texture ("Our boss, the sole proprietor of all he surveyed"), and while Marcus functions just fine as the picaresque hero of this nonfiction novel, genially suffering through the company picnic and a downtown-shaking earthquake, he never forces himself to be a "character" in any literary or hey-look-at-me way. He's likely to remain the single best historian of Amazon's ethos, if not its spreadsheet.

He moved to New York a week before the attacks of September 11, and heard the first plane strike the World Trade Center after walking his son to school. He resumed his old freelancer's life, while 2,400 miles away, Amazon, a chastened survivor of the dot-com debacle, hunkered down and began heading toward its first full year of profitability. If Marcus no longer has 9 million virtual dollars, he has something he almost certainly values more highly: a very good book to his name.

Henry Ward Beecher, Emerson's fellow Lyceum lecturer, once marveled: "Where is human nature so weak as in the bookstore?" Well, in the DVD section, or on Travelocity, or inside all the other ever-more-accessible venues for human avidity and weakness. The book business lurches on, through the (welcome) failure of the e-book, and into the bar-coded new age of Nielsen BookScan, which leaves every writer's retail-sales figures nakedly available to whatever publisher he may desperately need to approach next. A lot of commercial fiction's old warhorses have lost the strength to pull along the literary lame, as they used to.

But not for nothing were Mr. Micawber and Dr. Pangloss invented by writers. Something will improve, and until then it's all a matter of how you look at the sales chart. Just the other week, my agent told me to take special cheer in the second printing, however small, that had been ordered up for my new novel. "Flat," he instructed me, "is the new up." ♦

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Castles in Spain

Juan Carlos, Spain's once and future king.

BY PABLO PARDO

It is often said that the Spanish do not believe in monarchy, but have faith in King Juan Carlos. Meaning, one supposes, that in their hearts they believe in a republic, but they recognize the irreplaceable role played by their current monarch in assuring the arrival of a democratic regime in their country.

Juan Carlos
Steering Spain From Dictatorship to Democracy
by Paul Preston
W.W. Norton, 594 pp., $35

Like all clichés, this particular one is flawed. If the Spanish were mere "Juancarlistas," how could one explain the public emotion, even concern, displayed in the country with the recent wedding of the king's heir, Prince Felipe of Asturias, to a journalist—and a commoner? The ritual was carried out in the Cathedral of Madrid on May 22, and prices for good seats to watch the royal couple entering and leaving the church reached $75,000. Perhaps the Spanish are monarchists after all.

Nevertheless, there is something real in the Byzantine debate over monarchism versus Juancarlism in Spain. Juan Carlos I is much more than a head of state. He is a founding father of post-Franco Spain, and he earned that position by his own efforts. From the legal perspective, Juan Carlos is merely a "Euromonarch," an ornamental figurehead. In his book *Plan of Attack*, Bob Woodward failed miserably to describe the Spanish king's role when he declared that Juan Carlos I "held sway [over] the nomination of the country's president." The king has no more influence in choosing Spain's political leader than Elizabeth II has in selecting Britain's.

Writing about founding fathers is not easy, especially when they are still alive. The eminent British historian Paul Preston took up a serious challenge when he set out to write the unofficial biography of Juan Carlos I. Spanish political debate may be destructive, but since the advent of democratic rule there has been a quiet agreement in Spain to spare the head of state from having to deal with ideological bickering and media curiosity. The king has been portrayed in a positive light by the media, although this has not prevented constant gossip in the street, basically concerning his private life (he is said to be a womanizer), his role in the military coup attempt of 1981, and the fact that, after all, he was appointed by Francisco Franco, a military dictator who took power via a civil war. In *Juan Carlos: Steering Spain From Dictatorship to Democracy*, Preston risks falling into a combination of hagiography and scandal—bad traits in a serious historical study.

He seems to have avoided the bigger pitfalls. The book depicts the rapid evolution of post-Franco Spain from something very much like a banana republic in the death throes of fascism—with an exiled opposition fond of Stalinism—to a vibrant democracy firmly based in the West, in its values as well as its geography. Preston's book is not only a biography; it is also a political history of Spain from 1939 to 1983.

It hardly could have been otherwise. The debate over the future of the Spanish monarchy remained at political center stage in the country for most of the twentieth century. As Preston shows, in his dynamic narrative style, the Spanish conservative elite never abandoned the idea of restoring the monarchy, deposed in 1931 after pro-Republic forces won the local elections. When, in 1936, General Franco launched his coup against the Republic and began the civil war, some of his supporters among the aristocracy and the armed forces leaders remained fervent monarchists, to the point that Juan Carlos's father, Don Juan de Borbón, son of the same King Alfonso XIII deposed in 1931, tried to join the military insurrection.

The Francoists not only did not accept Don Juan's offer, but they also forced him back into exile, since, among the many constituencies of Francoism, there were several anti-monarchical forces. These included sympathizers of Mussolini's fascism, which formed the core of the *Movimiento*, the political umbrella created by Franco to bring order to his heterogeneous enthusiasts. Franco won the Civil War in 1939 and, during four decades, Spain was formally a single-party regime, with the *Movimiento* furnishing a political cover to de facto one-man rule.

Franco never accepted the restoration of the monarchy in the person of Don Juan, whom he considered too liberal and friendly with Freemasonry. (Franco's obsession with Spanish Freemasonry, which much more resembled its French, anticlerical counterpart than its British and American homologues, could fill a whole volume.) Instead, Franco allowed Don Juan's elder son, Prince Juan Carlos, to be educated under the strict canons of

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the *Movimiento*. His aim was for Juan Carlos to establish a monarchy identified with Franco's own political principles and thus to perpetuate his political legacy.

But the dictator erred. As Preston explained in his 1996 volume, *Franco: A Biography*, the old general increasingly lost control of his own regime, beginning in the mid-1960s. Effective political initiative fell into the hands of the so-called "technocrats," a group of Catholic modernizers who understood that the future of Spain lay in the direction of a liberal monarchy. It is not clear how much freedom this group was willing to allow in Spanish political life, but it is obvious that they plotted with Prince Juan Carlos for a democratic opening of the regime after Franco's death.

The rest is well known. Once Franco died, Juan Carlos became king and commenced the titanic work of dismantling Francoism's political structure from the inside. He alienated his followers within the *Movimiento*, ditched the technocrats, and established links with an opposition still heavily influenced by Marxism and nostalgia for the Republic. In fact, during approximately two and a half years at the beginning of his power, he committed a kind of political suicide, pushing the country towards a democratic monarchy in which he would have less power than the king of Sweden.

As a good professor—he teaches in the London School of Economics—Preston vividly describes the intrigues and bickering between the recusant Francoists, the elderly Don Juan, and the surviving old-fashioned monarchists. This is no little achievement, since the biggest part of Preston's biography is the story of a dour dictatorship, isolated from the rest of the world, and an impoverished and banished royal house trying to get its throne back.

Preston's main accomplishment, however, is not his description of this political process but of the intricacies of life in the Borbón dynasty. Don Juan, the current monarch's father, was ready to sign a pact with anyone to become king. Preston tells how Don Juan unsuccessfully negotiated his comeback with the Nazis, the Allies, the then-extreme Marxist Socialists, the democratic liberals, the ultraconservative Traditionalists, and, of course, Franco himself. Actually, Don Juan's conversations with Franco would be decisive for Juan Carlos: His father sent him to Spain as a student, to establish good relations with Franco, so that some day the dictator would let Don Juan, Franco's contemporary, become king. Preston's assessment of this is by no means benevolent: Don Juan sent Juan Carlos "as a hostage to Franco."

King Juan Carlos

All pictures: W.W. Norton.

This offers the reader an opportunity to look at the whole life of Juan Carlos from a fresh perspective, as someone impelled from very early to become king no matter what, and yet, at the same time, to put reasons of state well above his own interests as Juan Carlos de Borbón. That meant separation from his family and education in an alien culture; when Juan Carlos, ten years old, first arrived in Spain by his father's agreement with Franco, he did not even speak Spanish correctly. He always contended with uncertainty in reaching the throne by the benevolence of Francisco Franco, an ailing and then senile man, increasingly obsessed with Masonic, Jewish, and Marxist conspiracies.

Clearly, Preston is a Juancarlist, showing his respect and admiration for the king and his antipathy for his enemies by a generous employment of qualifiers and other highly charged words. The ultra-right press, according to Preston, adopted "an air of scandalized horror"; Franco's "malevolent" followers suffered "neurosis," and terrorist attacks drove them "to apoplexy." Alfonso de Borbón y Dampierre, a rival prince who disputed Juan Carlos's right to the throne, suffered "incomprehensible vagueness," and Franco himself is said to have been a master of "duplicity," "condescending," "cold," "patronizing," and characterized by a "combination of cunning and prejudice."

Such a mountain of adjectives risks transforming a historical work into a tale of simple good and bad people. This feeling is aggravated by the fact that there is no critical analysis of the king's actions. The reader feels compelled to ask himself if the monarch ever made any mistake, adopted any erroneous decision, or put forward any unwise judgment.

But Preston is not only a Juancarlist. He is also a leftist. It is surprising, for instance, when he suddenly refers to Felipe González, Spain's former Socialist prime minister, by his first name, the way his followers and friends do. This obvious bias contrasts starkly with certain minor problems in this book. Paradoxically, Preston's weaknesses appear in the middle of the book's main strength: the depiction of the king's intimate entourage. A case in point is the treatment of Queen Sofía, Juan Carlos's wife and the sister

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The leader of the Spanish Socialists meets with Juan Carlos in 1978.

of the deposed King Constantine of Greece.

Queen Sofía appears, plays a key role in consolidating Juan Carlos's political and personal relationship with Franco, and then almost disappears. Later, Preston explains, fairly confusingly, an alleged family crisis between the Spanish royal couple in the early 1990s became a matter of speculation in Spanish media, and prompted a number of reappointments among the king's personal servants.

Some of the king's more controversial friends—one of them was sentenced to jail on April 26 of this year for a $10 million fraud—are dealt with briefly, as reflecting no more than the monarch's "enthusiasm for beautiful women." Preston attains the heights of Juancarlism—and, bizarrely, loyalty to socialism—when he explains that these attitudes were understandable, since "with Felipe González's Socialist government presiding over a period of stability and prosperity, it was not surprising that [the king] began to relax somewhat and give over more time to his pleasures."

The most serious failing of Preston's *Juan Carlos* is the lack of in-depth analysis of the political process it describes. The main question is unanswered: Why did the king betray his political mentor, Franco, and implement a democratic regime? Preston explains that he must have reached that decision in the late 1960s, but does not address the reasons why. In a book with the degree of information exhibited, this is an unforgivable gap.

Equally important is the absence of a more profound analysis of the role of the Spanish monarchy now. The reader of the book comes to the conclusion—hinted at by Preston himself—that Juan Carlos I earned the respect of the Spanish public first because he was an architect of democratic change and then because he served as a fireman during successive attempts at military coups in the early 1980s. But now, with Spanish democracy firmly established, the monarchy risks losing at least part of the legitimacy it so painstakingly earned.

The most surprising aspect of *Juan Carlos* resides in the visible differences between the American and Spanish editions of the book—something that forces the reader to question Preston's intellectual honesty. On page 103 of the American edition, he writes: "Doña María de las Mercedes [Juan Carlos's mother], who fell into a big depression, began to drink." The reference to alcohol is omitted in the Spanish edition, published a little more than a year ago. On page 411 of the Spanish version, Preston narrates a dinner attended by, among others, the king, the queen, and "the chief of cabinet of [Adolfo] Suárez [then Spain's prime minister], Carmen Diez de Rivera, an elegant blonde aristocrat." The same description appears on page 371 of the U.S. edition, but with extra spice: mentioning Diez de Rivera, Preston continues, "to whom the king was greatly attracted."

The Spanish and the American editions also vary when Preston writes about newspaper reporting of the king's personal life. In the Spanish edition he describes "the media, with [the Madrid daily] *El Mundo* leading the pack." In the American version, the sentence features: "The media, with the sensationalist daily 'El Mundo' leading the pack." (In the interest of full disclosure, I will note that I am the Washington correspondent of *El Mundo*; but Preston is also among its contributors, having published, in March 2003, a two-page article in *El Mundo* about this book.)

Preston could have written all three of these things in the Spanish edition. Nothing would have happened, except, perhaps, some minor controversy and more critical reviews of the book. Preston seems to have tried to avoid that by resorting to self-censorship. These issues partly spoil a work that has value not only from the historical perspective, but politically as well. *Juan Carlos* is an extensive and well-written analysis of a regime change. A man educated from childhood to reign over a military dictatorship, Juan Carlos I "committed political hara-kiri"—as it is sometimes said in Spain—and handed power to the civilians to create a democracy.

Spain is not Iraq. Franco was far more intelligent and far-sighted than Saddam Hussein. When the Spanish *generalíssimo* died, he left a vibrant middle class, a financially slender military, and a strong economy. Juan Carlos, in his struggle to bring democratic change to Spain, successfully confronted terrorism, violent ethnic separatism, military intervention, and pressure from remnants of the old regime. He was almost unknown to his subjects and dismissed by the Francoists and most of the opposition as a stupid and out-of-touch child.

He overcame all those hurdles in part with subtle foreign support (Preston explains that American intervention was decisive in helping to stabilize Spain) but mostly because of his own political instincts. He built a new regime, and a new Spain. In the epoch when new political systems are to be constructed in the Middle East, the example of Juan Carlos is more relevant than ever. Undoubtedly, the world would be a better place if there were several imitators of Juan Carlos I to be found around the Persian Gulf. ♦

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Platonic Ideals

A teacher reads Plato's dialogues.

BY WILL DESMOND

A story in antiquity tells how Plato dreamt that upon his death, his soul rose up like a swan. The bird was so beautiful that onlookers attempted to shoot it down but succeeded only in dislodging a feather or two.

For Platonic philosophy, the moral of this allegory is the belief that subsequent generations have grasped only aspects of Plato's thought without comprehending its totality. The dominant view has found in Plato a spiritual thinker—a mystic and idealist, for whom true reality could only be thought, not seen or heard. In Raphael's painting *The School of Athens*, Plato points up towards the heavens, while for William Butler Yeats, "*Plato thought nature but a spume that plays / Upon a ghostly paradigm of things*." A more sinister Plato emerged during World War II, when Karl Popper criticized him as an enemy of "open societies"—a totalitarian thinker whose artistry only thinly disguises a puritanical self-righteousness and will to power. But others, such as Alfred North Whitehead, commended Plato for the first resolute commitment to the mathematization of nature, and the rationalization of society: "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."

A welcome addition to this "series of footnotes" comes in the form of Eva Brann's *The Music of the Republic*. Brann is a senior tutor at St. John's College in Annapolis. An archaeologist by training, she has over a long career published full-length books on an impressive variety of topics—Greek pottery, Homer, the imagination, ontology, time, education—as well as three translations from German and ancient Greek. Such a broad background makes her well qualified to speak on the multifarious topics in Plato's *Republic*. In *The Music of the Republic*, Brann offers a collection of fourteen essays on a variety of Platonic dialogues and themes. Short essays deal with the *Apology*, the *Charmides*, and the definition of time in the *Timaeus*—along with Plato's theory of ideas and the challenge of teaching Plato to undergraduates. More extensive and intricate are the two pieces on the *Phaedo*, three on the *Sophist*, and four on the *Republic*.

The Music of the Republic
Essays on Socrates: Conversations and Plato's Writings
by Eva Brann
Paul Dry, 320 pp., $24.95

The overall voice is that of a teacher speaking to like-minded teachers. At another level, the book serves as a companion piece for someone intent on reading Plato with slow deliberation. Brann maintains a running commentary: Following the general order of the *Phaedo*, the *Republic*, or the *Sophist*, she gives overviews and surveys, summarizes arguments, paraphrases passages, explicates underlying images and themes, and peppers the whole with references to other works.

Here Brann is at her strongest. She has a literary critic's eye for significant detail and is generous with her ideas about the construction, themes, and wordplay of the dialogues. The *Phaedo*, for instance, is set during the Athenian festival of the Theseia, in which a ship was sent to Crete in commemoration of Theseus' original expedition, when he killed the Minotaur and freed Athens from Minos' yearly tribute of seven youths and seven maidens. Brann uniquely (to my knowledge) explicates in detail how this setting is no mere backdrop: The dialogue is divided into fourteen sections; Socrates is depicted as the new Theseus; various Minotaurs are confronted, if not defeated—including death itself, the fear of death, misology or hatred of rational argument, and even the excessive attachment to one master or teacher, in this case Socrates himself with his "bull-like" glances.

Similarly, the title essay, "The Music of the Republic," has a remarkable discussion of the architecture of the Platonic dialogue: Brann sees the *Republic* as a descent into and ascent from the underworld, with the transforming vision of the "Good beyond essence" at its center. There are innumerable other observations and details that in themselves make *The Music of the Republic* rewarding. Brann brings a lifetime of experience, reading, and teaching to bear upon her subject, and as a good teacher, she is clear and unstinting with her insights. There is no hiding behind cluttered prose or scholarly name-dropping. She seems conversational and relaxed, serious yet not pedantic or without a sense of fun. Her detailed observations leave one with a renewed respect for Plato's subtle artistry: Seemingly irrelevant details appear as a strand in the whole tapestry; an apparently chance word, name, or remark is imbued with some greater importance.

This attention to detail, however, can at times prove confusing, and if the book suffers from a flaw, it is that it occupies the ambiguous ground between running textual commentary and a more global interpretation of the Platonic philosophy. Brann can leap from, say, an etymology to "pretty confident interpretive conclusions" in ways that can be disorienting. Startling conclusions are fired off, then dropped again as the commentary speeds on.

So, for example, Brann claims that the *Republic* is a clarion call to "dialogic community." But one has to jump to and fro in order to gather together

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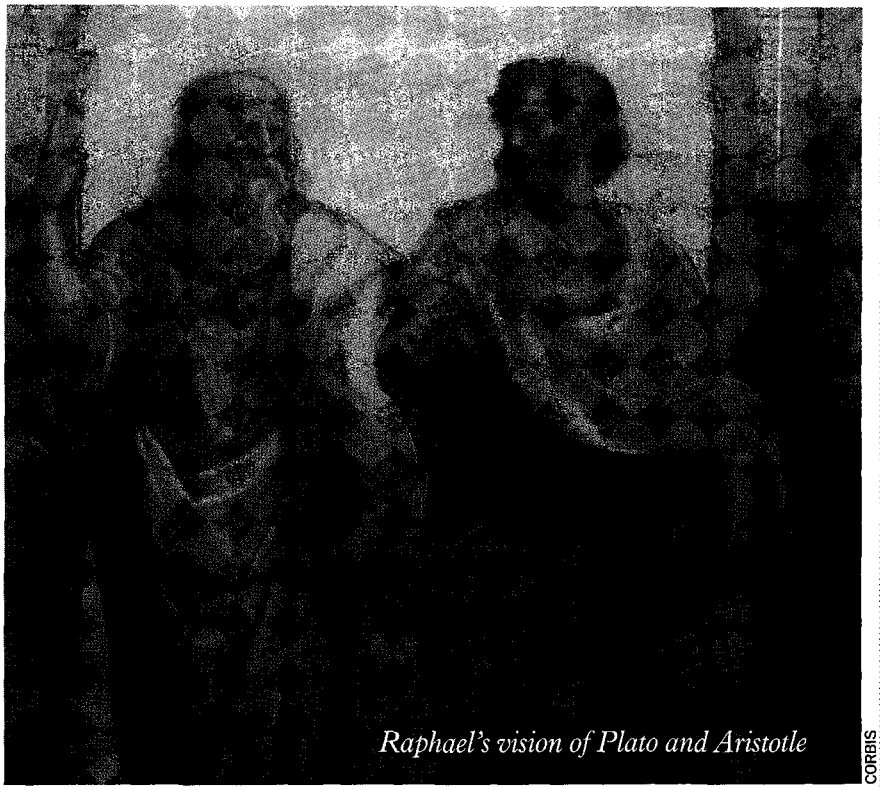

Raphael's vision of Plato and Aristotle

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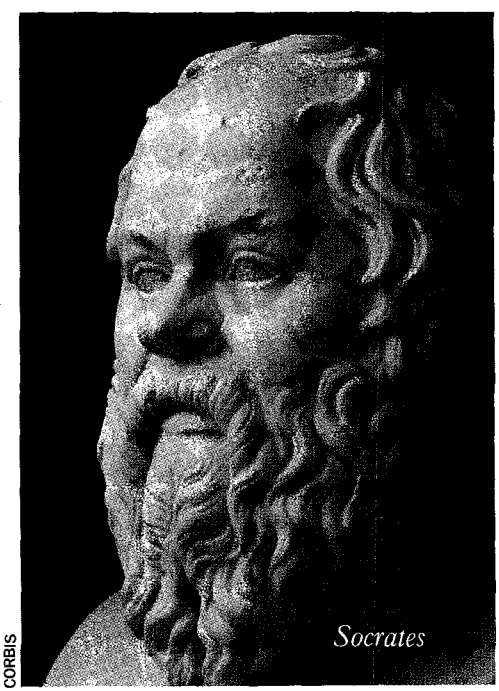
Brann's major reasons for this contention. They include the following: First, contrary to Popper, it is unfair and false to label Plato a proto-Fascist or Marxist, or a reactionary aristocrat whose political ideas blindly follow the prejudices of his class. Second, contrary to the literalism of many philosophical interpreters, the Platonic philosophy cannot be reduced to a putative "Theory of Forms" extracted from a few passages. For Plato, philosophy itself is more process than a set of fixed conclusions; philosophy is a process of dialogue between diverse interlocutors united in their search for a single idea. Finally, Plato saw his utopia not as a practical possibility but simply as a regulative ideal to inspire one as one navigates the turbulent multiplicities and dialogues of democratic Athens.

But despite some plausible arguments in her favor, Brann's conclusions on this central question are unorthodox and unconvincing. First, it requires some spectacular interpretative somersaults to explain away the sharp criticism (in Book Eight of the *Republic*, notably) of mass democracy for such vices as indecision, lack of discipline, lack of respect for expertise, false egalitarianism, and susceptibility to tyranny. Furthermore, the fact that Plato expresses his thought in dialogue form does not necessarily make him a dialogical thinker. Dialogue is for Plato one major avenue to knowledge, but insights can also be solitary affairs—difficult, if not impossible, to communicate. Brann must consistently downplay the striving for unity of thought that is evident in Plato's stress upon mathematics and systematic dialectic.

To explain her view of Plato as a dialogical philosopher, Brann might have included some comparative remarks on thinkers for whom dialogue is important, such as Buber, Marcel, Habermas, Hermans, and others. In such omissions, it is as if Brann, on the verge of taking flight after her Plato, demurs and refuses to leave the more solid ground of commentary. This is unfortunate, given that she does not see her book as simply a work of antiquarian piety or the Platonic dialogues as curious relics of a culture that is gone forever. On the contrary, Brann finds in Plato possible solutions to contemporary problems—a refutation of nihilism, for instance, as well as a healthy response to the "postmodern theory of images that breaks off their connection to an original in favor of an infinite self-mirroring."

Perhaps most important in this regard is Plato's lifelong effort to understand the phenomenon of sophistry—that uncanny rhetorical ability to make the false appear true. Ours is very much a time for fast-talkers and spin-doctors, not only in politics but also in those quarters of academia that have called into question the constraints of fact and objective truth.

Brann's nuanced discussion of the concept of appearances in the *Republic* and *Sophist* acknowledges an almost inevitable slippage between reality and image—yet at the same time refuses to jettison the Platonic faith in a single constant reality behind the kaleidoscopes of images. Thus, for Brann, Plato's variegated dialogues (with their wealth of personality sketches, conversations, arguments, metaphors, and myths) should recall us to the complex multiplicity of reality, while at the same time offering encouragement not to abandon the struggle to formulate coherent accounts of reality. For catching this one feather, Brann's book is worth reading. But it also catches many other feathers from the rising Plato—and *The Music of the Republic* should be applauded as a stimulating treatment of a perennially fascinating thinker. ♦



Socrates

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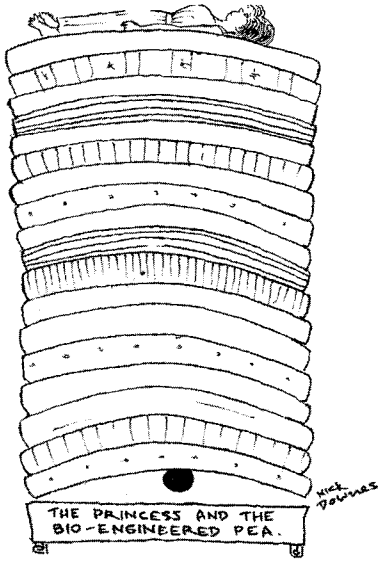

Books in Brief

***Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting our Brightest Young Minds* by Jan and Bob Davidson with Laura Vanderkam (Simon & Schuster, 256 pp., $24).** Quick, who are the least-served American schoolchildren? Apparently, it's not those who can't read their diplomas or speak the language. According to Jan and Bob Davidson, founders of the Davidson Institute for Talent Development, it's the highly gifted—those with IQs above 145.

This is something of an old chestnut among education theorists. Leta Hollingworth, researching in the 1920s and 1930s, wrote that "in the ordinary elementary school situation, children of 140 IQ waste half their time. Those of 170 IQ waste practically all." Margaret Mead found in a 1954 survey of U.S. schools "an appalling waste of first-rate talents."

According to *Genius Denied*, things haven't changed. The book is rife with educational horror stories: a five-year-old who attended Juilliard on Saturdays and had to clap quarter-notes in school the rest of the week; gifted programs centered around mythology instead of math; an eighth-grader who scored a perfect 800 on the math portion of the SAT but couldn't gain early admittance to college.

This, charge the Davidsons, amounts to age discrimination. If a student can fulfill the college admission criteria, why not let him in? Especially when the alternative is several years in educational exile. "A school where a highly gifted student consistently scores in the 99th percentile but suffers through hours of boredom in class cannot claim it is leaving no child behind," they insist, concluding that the smartest children lose a year of intellectual potential for every year they are left in a regular classroom.

Still, it's a little hard to gin up as much indignation as the authors at statistics such as "special education receives twenty cents on the educational dollar while gifted education receives a fraction of a penny." By their own account, IQs above 145 occur once in a thousand. Clearly, the number of children who can't keep up with the class for whatever reason is much, much higher.

After reading how schools short-change the gifted, you might expect to see the authors make a case for home-schooling. But it gets unaccountably short shrift here—strange, since half of the families who've worked with the Davidson Institute educate their children this way, and doubly strange after reading that "on any given weekday, 90 percent of America's children sit in public school classrooms ready to absorb whatever ideology or social cause dreamers want to impart along with reading, writing and arithmetic." Yikes.

—*Susie Currie*

***American Machiavelli: Alexander Hamilton and the Origins of U.S. Foreign Policy* by John Harper (Cambridge University Press, 347 pp., $30).** History may not repeat itself, but it can be pretty darn amusing. Alexander Hamilton once said, "Let Americans disdain to be the instruments of European greatness!" Hamilton wanted to build an American system "superior to the control of all transatlantic force and influence, and able to dictate the terms of the connection between the old and the new world."

Today the tables have been turned and Germany's foreign minister Joschka Fischer says that Europe needs its own Boston tea party. Who could deny that surging hormones for emancipation—and perhaps divergent interests—drive the European Union's nascent foreign policy? If history were a guide to the pathology of these relationships, then Hamilton's advice to the British might be relevant today for Washington: The surest way to secure a "permanent and happy union" was to allow the colonies "to be as free, as they desire." That reminds me of a senior Republican strategist saying privately before George W. Bush was elected that it was time to let the transatlantic relationship breathe; that it would be better if America could cease being the "demander"—haranguing the Europeans—and become instead the "demandee."

America's relations with the old world are the backdrop to John Harper's new book about Alexander Hamilton. Harper concentrates on Hamilton's role in foreign policy. He also wants to set straight all those Jefferson lovers and

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the school of historians—John Ferling, David McCullough, et al.—who never gave Hamilton his due or, worse, gave him a place in history as the "manipulator and cad." The twentieth century was surely Jefferson's century. But that's because of what Jefferson stood for—liberty and equality—not for what he actually accomplished, argues Harper.

The foreign policy legacy of Thomas Jefferson, writes Harper, is an ambiguous one. Jefferson's message was America as the model of liberal values, on the one hand; but America as crusader with an active mission to reform the world, on the other. Jefferson's legacy, Harper concedes, is no different: Realist consolidation and prudence are coupled with an "imperial temptation."

In the end, though, Harper links Machiavelli and Hamilton neatly with his own worldview. Hamilton is the inspiration for those who want a U.S. foreign policy today "less grandiose and ideological." Neocons beware.

—Jeffrey Gedmin

***Before Lewis and Clark: The Story of the Chouteaus, the French Dynasty That Ruled America's Frontier* by Shirley Christian (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 509 pp., $27).** The West prior to the explorations of Lewis and Clark was not a pristine vacuum. The native tribes were sparse, but they were present, and since the seventeenth century both French-Canadian and British fur traders had been exploring the West in haphazard wanderlust. Meanwhile, the Spanish had made inroads in the Southwest by way of Mexico.

New Orleans, Detroit, and St. Louis were all founded as trading posts—St. Louis in 1764 by Auguste Chouteau (1749-1829), a fifteen-year-old wilderness prodigy in command of a party of settlers. The subsequent rise of the aristocratic and entrepreneurial Chouteau clan is ably chronicled by Shirley Christian in her new book, *Before Lewis and Clark*.

Their business influence in the Mississippi and Missouri Valleys was unchallenged, and Lewis and Clark's arrival in 1803 found the Chouteaus living a life of "drawing-room luxury" on an otherwise primitive frontier. In a few short years the region had been governed by France, Spain, and finally the United States. The Chouteaus showed deft political skill in adapting to each change of the flag. The young American explorers were the recipients of both Chouteau hospitality and knowledge of the wilderness that lay ahead.

A nephew of the city's founder—Auguste Pierre Chouteau (1786-1838)—became a major shareholder in John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, thus vastly increasing the family fortune. His brother, Pierre Chouteau Jr. (1789-1865), guided a further generation into both the steamboat and railroad business at midcentury. Shirley Christian has given us an intimate and lively look at a family whose influence was crucial in the settlement of the American West.

—Bill Croke

***Tibet and Her Neighbours: A History* by Alex McKay (Thames & Hudson, 240 pp., $27.95).** A compilation of papers presented at the 2001 History of Tibet Conference in Scotland, Alex McKay's *Tibet and Her Neighbours: A History* is at once esoteric and political. The twenty articles include Helga Ueback's discussion of the Tibetan Empire during the Yarlung dynasty (seventh to ninth centuries). She mentions the celebrated alliance with the principality of Zhangzhung in western Tibet, supported by the marriage between its ruler and a sister of King Songtsen Gampo of central Tibet, who was the first to build a royal residence in what was later to become Lhasa, and himself took daughters of the Chinese emperor and the Nepali king as queens. Uebach confirms the Tibetan territory of this era as identical to the center of the area that is culturally Tibetan today.

Alexandre Andreyev examines Russia's pre-1904 discussions with Lhasa, a pressing motivation for the 1904 British expedition into Lhasa led by Colonel Francis Younghusband. (Patrick French's 1995 biography, *Younghusband*, is a good place to begin studying that epic march and its consequences.) Andreyev examines the long-held allegation that Tsarist Russian arms had made their way into Tibet by the early twentieth century, a prime factor in the British foray. It may have been optimistic of him to hope he would find evidence at this late date.

The "Great Game" was under way, and detailed portrait-quality photographs by Charles Bell, most dating from his residence in Tibet around 1921, are reproduced here in all their compelling mystery and beauty. Bell took office as the British head of mission in Lhasa after the Younghusband expedition; like Hugh Richardson, the British and Indian head of mission in Lhasa until shortly before the Chinese invasion of 1950, he was a tireless and sympathetic writer on Tibet. His rare photographs are highly valued as both art and anthropology, and these are no exception. Many are, in fact, more intriguing than those already published in Bell's own books.

In 1991 Richardson wrote: "There were no Chinese troops and no officials [in Lhasa] until 1935 when a small party managed to get in. They were regarded by the Tibetans as an unofficial liaison office; and in 1949 they were expelled." One can now find contemporary denunciations of Richardson on Chinese news websites. Roberto Vitale stresses the urgent need to "collect oral histories of pre-1959 Tibet while witnesses [are] still alive," and Warren Smith has this to say on Tibetan national identity: "China's current anti-Dalai Lama campaign . . . should convince anyone not afflicted with unrealistic hopefulness that the Chinese have no intention of negotiating with him. . . . The Dalai Lama may be excessively optimistic about the potential for the survival of Tibetan culture and identity" under Chinese control.

—Terese Coe

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"It will take the government at least an additional two years to eliminate a backlog of almost 4 million applications for citizenship, green cards and work permits, the administration's top immigration official told a congressional subcommittee Thursday.

Eduardo Aguirre Jr., director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, acknowledged that the problem was serious, but he said his agency's greatest need was time, not funds."

—Los Angeles Times, June 18, 2004

CONCLUSION: RECOMMENDATIONS

In sum, while the Immigration and Naturalization Service has a venerable history as the nation's gatekeeper, Six Sigma Solutions LLC has identified several areas within the INS that could benefit from immediate attention:

Call-in Services: While we applaud the INS for providing over 500 telephone representatives for those who call in, we recommend that the agency also provide an equal number of telephones. Nine, we feel, is insufficient. On the subject of hold music, we recommend that the songs be slightly up-tempo, as a large number of callers are being lost after one to two days. Also, it might free up some funds if a recording were used rather than a live orchestra.

Departmental Repurposing: We propose that the INS eliminate the title of Please Resubmit Absolutely Everything Because For Some Reason We Need it All Over Again Specialist. The 200 or so staffers with this position can most likely be retrained to do something more productive. One possible re-assignment would be to merge these employees with the Your Application Got Jammed Between My Filing Cabinets So Now We're Going to Arrest You department.

Organization: We recognize that alphabetization is underappreciated as an art. However, with applications hitting the 4-million mark, this is the kind of task for which computers can be helpful. Also, the retrieval of forms would be aided, we feel, if documents were alphabetized according to the names of the applicants as opposed to the first letter on each page.

Care of Documents: Birth certificates are not coasters.

Streamlined Decision-making: We recognize the helpfulness of establishing teams to specialize in especially complex application decisions. However, while we cannot immerse ourselves in all the factors involved in such decisions, we cannot see that it makes sense to, for example, take a week to discuss a green card application if the applicant is already dead.

Interagency cooperation: The Department of Homeland Security should ideally be cc'd for applications containing the words "fiery Imam."

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The Wealth of Indian Nations

It is said that a rising tide raises all boats, but that has not been true for American Indians. Despite recent growth partly owing to gambling casinos built on reservations, per capita income for Native Americans living on reservations in 1999 was $7,846 compared to a U.S. average of $27,880. This puts reservation Indians on a par with the people in countries such as Palau or Oman.

Why does this bastion of poverty persist in a sea of wealth? One hypothesis is that Indian cultures are inimical to capitalism, but this is not supported by the facts. Supposedly Chief Seattle said in the 1850s: "How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land. . . . Every part of the Earth is sacred to my people." Never mind that these were not the words of the chief but were fabricated for a television program; this view does not fit the historical facts. From tepees to horses to land and water, pre-Columbian Indians established property rights described by one anthropologist as "naked possession." Even after being confined to reservations, "the tradition of individual ownership was so well established that Indians resisted government efforts to establish common property," says economist Leonard Carlson.

Another explanation for reservation poverty is that Native Americans lack high-quality natural resources. Many reservations, however, encompass hundreds of thousands of acres, including valuable natural resources. In the 1980s, for example, the Crow tribe had $27 billion worth of coal, more than $3 million per tribal member. Unfortunately, the asset earned a paltry 0.01 percent return—leaving 55 percent of tribal members on public assistance.

Physical capital and human capital are surely important to economic prosperity but are lacking on reservations because the institutions that govern Indian economies do not encourage investment. Indians cannot borrow money because their land, which is held in trust by the federal government, cannot be used as collateral and because tribal judicial systems may not consistently enforce contracts. Moreover, education rates lag behind the national average.

A growing number of studies show that **private property, a consistent rule of law, and a lack of burdensome governmental regulations are crucial for encouraging investment in the developing world, and the same holds for reservations**. Agricultural productivity on Indian lands is 30 to 90 percent less than on similar private lands. Furthermore, tribal judicial systems are noted for their biased decisions that discourage outsiders from contracting with tribes or individual Indians. Indeed, tribes that have relinquished their judicial authority to the states wherein they live have growth rates for 1989–1999 that average 20 percent more than tribes without equivalent state oversight.

Many believe that pulling Native Americans out of poverty can only be done with quick fixes such as federal aid and gambling, which are not sustainable solutions, especially for rural tribes. If American Indians are to escape poverty, they must abandon what former interior secretary James Watt called "bastions of socialism" and commit to a rule of law with secure property rights and market institutions.

—Terry L. Anderson and Dominic Parker

Terry L. Anderson is the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and the executive director of the Property and Environment Research Center (PERC). Dominic Parker is a research associate at PERC.

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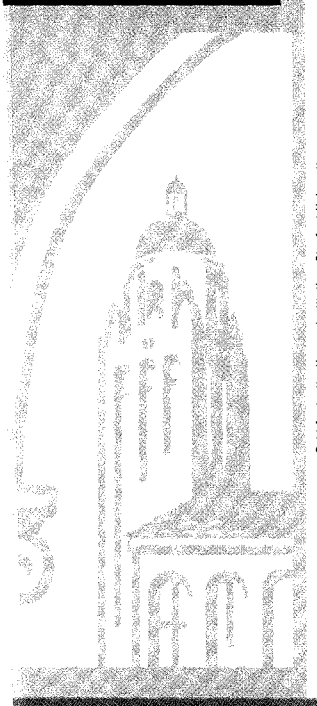

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How I saved my own life.

My name is Bob and I'm an ex-smoker. I quit smoking a few months ago. I'd tried quitting before, but with the help of the experts at the American Legacy Foundation, this time was different. Because they helped me come up with a plan to quit. That was the big thing. A plan – which I stuck to.

I set a Quit Date, visited my doctor, used the patch religiously and began writing in a journal. I even started working out again. Trying so many different things is one of the reasons I'm still smoke-free. That along with the love and support of my family and friends.

It wasn't easy, and it's still a struggle every day. But now you can see what I went through by going to my Web site, bobquits.com. The American Legacy Foundation put the site together so other people could see how my plan worked and learn how they can quit, too. The site details my entire quitting experience, including my daily journals and video diaries. You can get your own quit plan by calling Legacy at 1-800-399-5589. Yeah, quitting was hard. But it can be done. You just need a plan.

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